University of Alberta

THE LIVING MOMENT: THE PASTORAL COUNSELLING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING TO BE PRESENT WITH THEIR CLIENTS

by

Kristine Lund

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Abstract

How do pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients? This is the question that guides this hermeneutically inspired action research study into the experience of presence in both the therapeutic and pedagogical relationship. The interpretations presented emerged from discussions with a focus group consisting of pastoral counsellors and pastoral counselling supervisors, past students, the researcher's daughter and her tutor, and autobiographical material. These interpretations are informed by an "enactivist" theory of learning, postmodern understandings of the self, and theoretical perspectives on the role of the therapeutic relationship.

The primary purpose of the study is to understand how students learn to be present with their clients. In particular, beginning counselling students tend to want to analyse the past or brainstorm about the future. However, the past is gone and the future is not here yet, therefore, all that is available for therapeutic work is the present, or the living moment.

The eight hermeneutical "nodes" emerging from the research provide a way of inquiring into the complex experience of presence. The first node "The elusiveness of presence," indicates that presence is both tangible and elusive. The second node "It's more than you and me," acknowledges that in the therapeutic or pedagogical relationship, both individuals will be changed. The third node "The vulnerable ego" further develops the themes of embodied awareness and the dynamic interplay of self, other and the relationship. The fourth node "It's about the learning," recognizes that learning requires a willingness to face oneself. The fifth node "The learning occasion," addresses the significance of the pedagogical relationship. The sixth node "Problems about learning,"

notes the challenges that adult learners face in a new learning situation. The seventh node "Disconnected connections," notes the relationship that Western culture plays in supporting and encouraging disconnection from self, other, and the natural world. The eighth node "Parallel process," observes the complexities in communication involved in the therapeutic and pedagogical relationship. The eight hermeneutical nodes inform the pedagogical relationship which is a learning relationship and also a relationship that learns.

This work is dedicated to Patches, who first taught me about presence, and to the many clients, students, and supervisors who each in their own way have been part of my learning about presence.

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Chapter One: Beginnings

Scenario

September, 1980 I have just moved to a small rural village located an hour east of Calgary. My husband (Orlow) and I are the new pastors at the Lutheran church, the only church in town. It is a typical rural town with the requisite curling and hockey rinks and a church spire that is visible from a few miles away. I am here by myself as my husband is in the United States awaiting his landed immigrant papers. As usual things always take longer than expected!

So many new faces! How will I ever remember them all and the names too? Where do I start? Sunday sermon to write, confirmation class to prepare, Mrs. Johnson is in the hospital in Calgary. On and on it goes. I haven't even got all the books unpacked and put on the shelves in the office.

April, 1981. I am in Saskatoon attending a conference. I call home and hear the news from Orlow. "I just heard that Linda Jamieson is missing!"

"What happened?" I ask.

"It seems that she was going babysitting and never came back." Orlow answered.

"Do you think they'll find her?" Even as I ask, I realize the futility of the question, but what else do you say?

“I hope so.” he replies.

“Well, I’ll see you tomorrow. I hope they’ve found her by the time I get back.” I respond.

I get off the phone and stand there dumbstruck. How could something like this happen in our sleepy little town? She has to show up. This must be some kind of mistake or misunderstanding or something. I share the news with a couple of conference participants who are lingering in the foyer. I feel wooden and numb.

The next day. I arrive home to find that there is still no sign of Linda. We go over to see the family that evening. There we hear that a man had called another teenage girl in town to babysit. She was busy so she gave him Linda’s name as another reliable babysitter in town. The parents had only lived in the village for a short period of time and were not familiar with him but there were a lot of different families with the same surname. They were a little uneasy letting her go but felt, that, since it was a small place and a common last name, it would be all right. She was to phone when she got to the house. They never saw her again.

This begins an eleven week “vigil” where Orlow and I are in daily contact with the family. The RCMP organize a full-fledged search of the area. They gather volunteers from the community and with their trained dogs search around the village. They look in abandoned buildings on farms, in clumps of trees and in sloughs. The search comes up empty. There is both relief and disappointment.

I am with the family. There is a continuous stream of neighbors visiting, bringing casseroles or cakes, and trying to find some way to be supportive at a time when we all feel helpless to do anything. What do you say at a time like this? Will anything make a difference?

The family is distraught, sometimes weeping and other times sitting quietly. They begin to ask me questions: Why did this happen? She was a bright gifted teenager who always behaved responsibly. Why would something like this happen to our family? She never got into any trouble. How could something like this happen here? It's supposed to be a small, quiet community!

I feel a sense of panic rise inside me. I don't know the answers to their questions. They're looking at me as if I'm supposed to know. I'm the religious expert. All of a sudden I don't feel like much of an expert! Where was God in this? Good question. I'm sure I have an answer somewhere . . . but where? I mumble that in such tragic experiences we are challenged to find answers and to find God in the midst of it all. My words have a hollow ring.

I go home determined to have better answers tomorrow. I look at the shelves filled with books that line one wall of my office. The answer's got to be in one of those books. I pull one down on Job; now that ought to have something in it. Here's another one on suffering and another on pastoral care to those who have suffered a loss. I feel a sense of calm settle inside as I am sure that I will find something that will equip me to go back to the family tomorrow. I read long into the night.

Days and weeks pass. As time progresses, my answers to their questions remain just as elusive. The answers in the books seem incomplete, empty, insufficient. We are all asking questions -- the family, the community and I. I feel incompetent, stupid and impatient with my inability to come up with an answer that would suddenly make us all feel better.

Then something begins to happen. Perhaps it is the movement of the Spirit, or desperation, or maybe I am remembering a piece of learning from the clinical education that I had taken in the hospital. Whatever it is, I invite the family to talk about how they are making sense of this situation for themselves. How would they answer those questions? At first, they look at me, questioning me with their eyes, to see if I really do want to hear what they are thinking. Then, they slowly begin to talk about some of their thoughts and feelings. They don't have any answers either. They want me to hear their struggle, to understand their fear, pain, and guilt and then to celebrate with them, all the wonderful times and stories they remember about their daughter. The space is bigger. It's not that the room is any larger but there is more room inside me and also between us. Yet at the same time there is a closeness that wasn't there before. What has just happened? I feel warm inside as I go home.

End of June, 1981. The RCMP have called. Two boys out riding their bikes came across a body on the edge of an irrigation ditch in southern Alberta. They think it is Linda. My heart sinks. The family is devastated.

July 4, 1981 The funeral is today. I have never done a funeral before. I am nervous and scared. This morning a RCMP officer came to the door of the parsonage asking us to park our car in front of the main door to the church so the police can bring their van and put it there later. They will be taking pictures of everyone going in and out of the church. The officer tells me it is possible that the murderer will come to the funeral. I never thought of that. I feel sick inside. I wish he hadn't told me.

The church is packed and the crowd overflows into the basement. The whole community has turned out. The grief, shock, and anger are palpable. The funeral procession makes its way slowly a mile out of town to the cemetery. It is a hot, windy, prairie summer day. The grass crunches under my feet as I walk through the cemetery to the newly dug hole. It's over. Somehow it doesn't feel over.

A week later. The family has called us over for coffee. It's been a couple of days since we've seen them, probably the longest stretch in months. I am sitting on the deck enjoying the summer evening. All of a sudden, I see a bundle of fur coming toward me and before I know it I have a six- month old Blue Merle Sheltie puppy in my lap. He wiggles and licks me. His name is Morgan Berjeans Patches. The family accompanies him. "If I don't like him, I don't have to keep him," they say. (Not likely, my heart has already been won!) They thank me for being with them over the last few months and for the funeral. I am overwhelmed. They want to thank me! How do I thank them?! My life will never be the same.

Introduction

The experience described above happened in my first year as a parish pastor. As a newly ordained pastor, I had come to this parish filled with all that I had learned and excited about the possibilities of ministry. I had learned in seminary that answers were to be found in books, yet in the midst of this experience, I found the books only moderately helpful. My experience of being with the family following the abduction and subsequent murder of their daughter, precipitated a major personal and professional crisis for me. I was suddenly confronted by my personal and professional limitations. The experience of my own limitations initiated the search for what I had experienced as "something more." I felt this "more" physically, emotionally and relationally. However, the description of the "more" was elusive; it resisted being contained by language. I knew from my lived experience that something important had happened and that it had made a difference in how I experienced myself and the family.

This early parish experience initiated a journey that has taken me many places in search of a greater understanding of the "more." I have taken part in workshops, read other books, participated in pastoral counselling education, engaged in my own personal therapy, observed and reflected upon my experience and I have had conversations with others. As I learned more about pastoral counselling and what it meant for me to be present with clients, I became curious to learn how as a supervisor I might facilitate that learning for pastoral counselling students. It is from my own personal experience of learning about presence and from my professional role as a teaching supervisor that I come to the research question: the pastoral counselling students' experience of learning to be present with their clients.

This research has three general objectives: First, it aims to understand how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with clients. Second, it aims to contribute to the research on human learning by attempting to discern how teachers create the conditions for and facilitate such learning. Third, it aims to understand how both teachers and students recognize and utilize this experience of learning.

Context of the Study

What is pastoral counselling? Traditionally, pastoral counselling has been seen as a ministry of the church. Benner (2003) recalls that originally pastoral counselling referred to the "care of the souls," originating from the Latin *cura animarum*. (p. 14) He notes that "cura" is commonly translated as care, but it actually contains the idea of both care and cure. Care supports the well-being of the individual whereas cures are designed to restore well-being that has been lost. Historically, the Christian church has incorporated both meanings of cura and has understood soul care to "involve nurture and support as well as healing and restoration" (p. 14).

Benner contends that soul is the most common English translation for the Hebrew word "nepesh" and the Greek word "psyche." Many biblical scholars suggest that a more complete understanding is either "person" or "self." The soul is not part of a person but his or her total being. A human person does not have a soul but rather is a soul. Therefore, soul refers to "the whole person including the body with particular focus on thinking, feeling, and action" (p. 14). Consequently, pastoral counsellors nurture what is deeply human in each individual and in the pastoral counselling relationship. It is with a sense of awe and mystery that the pastoral counsellor experiences the recreating power of the divine. While the experience of the divine traditionally would have been named in Christian terms, clients today come from many faith traditions, including those who would not name themselves as having a connection to any faith community. They come to a pastoral counsellor because they want their whole person to be respected and valued.

Therefore, pastoral counsellors today must be open to the experience of spirituality in many forms.

Patton (1993) states that pastoral counselling has experienced three paradigms: classical, clinical pastoral, and communal contextual. In the classical paradigm the emphasis was on the importance of listening. Oden (1989) notes, that as the classical tradition informs us, it is the message of God's hearing and remembering. Patton observes that frequent themes in the Synoptic Gospels are the importance of listening, and of understanding the message and the distinction that is made between those who are prepared and those who are not. He observes that these are powerful images for the pastoral counsellor. The role of the pastoral counsellor is to listen to the client's situation and seek the connection between that particular life situation and the message of Scripture.

The clinical pastoral paradigm emphasises the person and the relationship using both psychological and theological resources to deepen the understanding of the counsellor, of the client and of the counselling relationship. Patton describes what is offered as "relational humanness" (p. 215). The counsellor may not solve the problem that the client presents but offers a personal presence and availability. Good pastoral counselling involves not just a presentation of and a listening to the problem but also the meeting of persons. Therefore, the contribution of the clinical pastoral paradigm is the emphasis on the person of the counsellor, as well as the relationship in which the counselling takes place. The message of care of the classical paradigm becomes embodied in a particular way in the clinical paradigm.

Patton observes that the communal contextual paradigm is in its beginning phase. It first recognizes that the context within which pastoral counselling takes place is important. Pastoral counselling recognizes that the understanding of the human person as demonstrated by various counselling theories and theological perspectives can impact the therapeutic process. As well, other factors such as gender, age, culture, sexual orientation, etc. also are important factors in the pastoral counselling relationship. Pastoral counselling recognizes the importance of contextual and systemic factors in the counselling relationship.

In the 1960s, pastoral counselling emerged as a more formal profession in the United States with the formation of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC). AAPC grew out of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) begun by Anton Boisen. Asquith (1992) notes that Boisen recruited four students for a summer training program at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts in 1925. As a chaplain, he believed that it was very important to study human experience first hand. He called it a reading of the "living human document." What ministered to the patients was attention to the "living human experience." According to Boisen (1936):

> The fact is that psychotherapy is far less dependent upon technique than it is upon the personal relationship between physician and patient. Wherever the patient has come to trust the physician enough to unburden himself [sic] of his [sic] problems and wherever the physician is ready to listen with intelligent sympathy, good results are likely to follow regardless of the correctness or incorrectness of the physician's particular theories or procedures. (p. 11)

He believed these kinds of practical experiences were a necessary addition to classroom learning in theological education. Boisen focussed on the experiences of the mentally ill and believed that certain forms of mental illness had a religious dimension and that it was important for this dimension to be studied by those who were interested in the spiritual life.

This focus grew out of Boisen's own experience of several psychotic episodes during which he was admitted into Westboro State Hospital. There he recognized the religious themes within his illness and observed that the doctors who treated him were "not fitted to deal with religious problems [and that] if they succeed in their aims, the patient is shorn of the faith in which lies his [sic] hope of cure" (p. 17). Meanwhile, Richard Cabot was a professor of clinical medicine at Harvard medical school who had returned from World War I with a concern for the larger problems of humanity. He became an important ally for Boisen as he shared the vision for including a clinical year as part of theological study. Boisen was intrigued with Cabot's emphasis on making an accurate diagnosis of the patient's problem and the importance of case reports. This exposure to methodology reinforced Boisen's interest in carefully studying all aspects of a person's experience including his or her religious experiences. In 1930, Boisen participated in the Council for the Training of Theological Students and remained a consultant until the end of his professional career.

From the early groups of students that Anton Boisen supervised, clinical pastoral education has grown to be an educational experience that is offered to those studying theology in many places around the world. Boisen's emphasis on the "living human document" has remained, with the recognition of the importance of the integration of theology and psychology. Periods of education are termed "units" and students are involved in some kind of clinical practice (depending on the educational context), as well as in meeting with peers and supervisor for didactic input and personal and professional reflection. In Canada, the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education

(CAPPE) was founded in the late 1950s. There are two streams within CAPPE: pastoral care which includes education that occurs in hospitals, prisons, extended care centers etc. and pastoral counselling. My certification is as a pastoral counsellor and as a teaching supervisor in pastoral counselling. I currently supervise units of Pastoral Counselling Education (PCE) at the Pastoral Counselling Group in Edmonton. I also co-coordinate a Master's degree in Pastoral Psychology and Counselling (MAPPC) at St. Stephen's College. The students who comprise the context for this study are students within the MAPPC degree as well as others who are wanting to develop their clinical skills and are participating in units of PCE at the Pastoral Counselling Group. Students participating in this kind of education would recognize the importance of the integration of theology and counselling theory into clinical practice. The model of education consists of an action-reflection model of learning in which students work with clients under supervision, meet with a peer group for the discussion of counselling theory, case discussion and theology and also reflect on their identity as pastoral counsellors. They meet weekly for individual supervision of their client work with their supervisor. It is out of this context of supervising pastoral counselling students that the research question emerged. I welcomed the opportunity for a focussed time to discover how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients.

The Significance of the Question

Why is it important for pastoral counsellors to learn to be present with their clients? James Bugental (1999) states, "What is most directly (almost tangibly) available for the work, is the *present (i.e., living) moment,* the client's and the therapist's being in this very *now*" (p. 19). Stated simply, the present or the moment that is currently being lived, is all that is available. The past is gone and the future is not here yet. However, this does not mean that the past and future are not important. Kerby (1991) notes that our life is characterized by what Husserl called the "'living present,' a present that contains, as Augustine long ago pointed out in his *Confessions*, 'a present of things past and a present of things to come'" (p. 19). William James (1890/1983) expressed the same point saying, "The practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we can look in two directions into time" (p. 574).

As was true of my experience in the scenario that began this chapter, it is common for beginning counselling students to be "outside" of the therapy room. By this I mean, they work with the client's concerns either from a perspective of retelling or analysis of past events or by brainstorming about possible future options, without acknowledgment of the context within which the telling is occurring. While this kind of recounting of one's experiences is helpful to some extent, if the counsellor continues to be past or future oriented without grounding that experience in the present, the helpfulness is limited. Only when the past or future is brought into the present context can lasting and significant change or growth occur.

Overview of the Dissertation

Following this introductory chapter the structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter Two describes a hermeneutically inspired action research methodology. Following on ideas presented by Gadamer (1975, 1976, 1981) and D. G. Smith (1991) I seek to understand the phenomenon of presence as experienced in the context of pastoral counselling. It is not simply reporting about the experience of presence; it is also about creating the experience of presence.

Chapter Three outlines a philosophical hermeneutical understanding of the self. This chapter includes an overview of different ways that human beings have come to understand the self.

Chapter Four begins with a scenario describing an incident with a pastoral counselling student in supervision. In this chapter I address various theories of learning and adult education and provide a commentary on the scenario that begins the chapter.

Chapter Five provides a brief overview of qualitative research as it relates to the therapeutic relationship which is followed by a discussion of existentialism and existential therapy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of James Bugental's work, looking at his understanding of presence and the therapeutic relationship.

Chapter Six describes eight nodes of hermeneutic inquiry emerging from various sources of data. These nodes of inquiry identify different aspects of the experience of presence as well as the pastoral counselling student's experience of learning to be present.

Chapter Seven provides the conclusions emerging from this study and the implications for the practice of pastoral counselling and the supervision of pastoral counselling students. I return to the scenario presented at the beginning of chapter one and interpret that experience in terms of the learning I have gained through this research project.

Chapter Two: Hermeneutically Inspired Action Research

My interest in determining how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients emerged from my lived experience as a pastoral counsellor and teaching supervisor. It began with the experience as a parish pastor that I described in chapter one. It was in this early experience in my professional life that I became aware of my professional and personal limitations. This left me with a sense of uneasiness and discontentment. I felt at the time that there had to be "more" but I did not know what the "more" would be. This feeling of uneasiness has been the impetus for my exploration of the experience of presence in both my personal and professional life. My early learnings, which were primarily personal, over time became integrated into my professional life as a pastoral counsellor. Later, in my role as a teaching supervisor, I began to wonder how to integrate this learning into the pedagogical relationship.

In this chapter I begin with an overview of contemporary philosophical hermeneutics, followed by an overview of educational action research and a description of hermeneutically inspired action research. I have chosen a hermeneutically inspired action research approach because it facilitates the exploration of the complex experience of presence.

The Hermeneutic Imagination

David Smith (1991) observes that hermeneutics has a long history. There was a school of interpretation in ancient Alexandria and it is known that Aristotle used the term in the title of one of his writings. However, the question of interpretation only became problematic at the time of the Reformation. Smith notes that the "issue was . . . whether the authority for the meaning of a given text resides within a traditional interpretive community such as the Church (or now the State), or whether a text has its own internal coherence and integrity which can be recovered by any well-intended individual possessed with the right skills" (p. 189).

By the eighteenth century the question of method gained central importance. Philosophers during this time were confident that life could be controlled and understood by correct logic. D. G. Smith observes that contemporary hermeneutics challenges the assumption that truth is "ultimately a methodological affair" (p. 189).

According to D. G. Smith, in the nineteenth century Friedrich Schleiermacher was perhaps the most notable hermeneutical thinker. He identified three themes within hermeneutical inquiry; "namely, the inherent creativity of interpretation, the pivotal role of language in human understanding, and the interplay of part and whole in the process of interpretation" (p. 190). Later, this process became identified as "the hermeneutical circle" (Gadamer, 1990). Palmer (1969) notes that for Dilthey:

> The circularity of understanding . . . [attests that] there is really no true starting point for understanding, since every part presupposes the others. This means that there can be no "presuppositionless" understanding. Every act of understanding is in a given context or horizon; even in the sciences one explains only "in terms of" a frame of reference. Understanding in the human studies takes as its context "lived experience," and understanding that has no relationship to lived experience is not appropriate to the human studies. (pp. 120 -121)

D. G. Smith notes that for Schleiermacher, interpretation and understanding are not just technical functions but creative acts. He notes that "good interpretation involves a playing back and forth between the specific and the general . . . . When this interplay is applied to the understanding of persons, one is inevitably drawn into a consideration of how language both encourages and constrains a person's self-understanding" (p. 190). Schleiermacher believed that every conversation depended on earlier thought. Therefore, every person in one way is situated where language is formed and in another way is the speaker who can only be understood within the whole of the language.

D. G. Smith states that, in the twentieth century, Wilhelm Dilthey's work contributed to philosophical hermeneutics and the methodological interests of the social and historical sciences. Smith further observes that Dilthey, under the influence of Edmund Husserl, began to explore "understanding" as a methodological concept which originates in the experience of human life. D. G. Smith (1991) explains that for Dilthey:

> Human understanding is a "category of life" . . . which is manifest daily whenever we find ourselves in situations of which we have to make sense. Furthermore, as human beings we are surrounded by the "expressions of life" . . . in texts, artifacts, gestures, and voices . . . . We understand them to the degree to which we can show how they emerge from "lived experience" . . . Good interpretation shows the connection between experience and expression. (p. 191)

Like Schleiermacher, Dilthey identified the meaning of the text or action with the subjective intention of its author. He was one of the first to suggest that written statements are the highest form of human expression. This was significant because it emphasized that good interpretation acknowledges the relationship between experience and expression.

D. G. Smith suggests that Edmund Husserl was the most significant shaper of all the interpretive streams of human science which have developed since the beginning of the twentieth century. Smith goes on to note that Husserl introduced the idea of the "lifeworld" to depict our experience of the world as pre-existing before we say or do anything about it. He also laid the foundation for later phenomenologies of human social behaviour. Most important, however, was Husserl's challenge of the Enlightenment ideal of objective reason. Through his theory of "intentionality," Husserl explains that thinking and interpreting are not abstractions but, instead, are always activities that emerge from and continue to be connected to the human subject's world of experience. Human beings cannot separate abstract thought from the objects and actions of thought. After Husserl, words like "understanding," "interpretation," and "meaningfulness" are "rooted, hermeneutically speaking in a sense of the dialogical, intersubjective, and conversational nature of human experience" (p. 192).

D. G. Smith notes that Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger, "gave a radical new meaning to the term hermeneutics by incorporating it into his unique re-writing of the Western philosophical tradition around the question of Being. After Heidegger, hermeneutics is . . . *the* foundational practice of Being itself" (p. 192). As Heidegger (1971) suggests, "Hermeneutics no long refers to the science of interpretation but rather to the process of interpretation that is an essential characteristic of Dasein" (pp. 9-10). Dasein literally means "there-being", from Da (there) and Sein (being). Crusius (1991) observes that, "For Heidegger, it denoted the human entity in all its ways of being or "human-being-in-the-world" (p. 9).

D. G. Smith argues that the nature of Being and human be-ing is conveyed by the interpretive process. He contends that "interpretation is the primordial condition of human self-understanding so that a phenomenology of Being reveals its fundamental mode to be precisely hermeneutical" (p. 192). Heidegger shifted from considering problems of epistemology to considering the problem of ontology, that is, what it is to be a human being. It was this shift that radically altered modern debates on the nature of science and of knowing. Leonard (1994) notes that before this the focus had been on how the "private mind apprehends the external world through a mechanically driven and unreliable body" (p. 43).

Leonard observes that Heidegger inherited a legacy of Western thought that was largely structured by a Cartesian mentality. Following the work of Descartes and his contemporaries, the human mind or consciousness was believed to be distinct and separated from the biological human body and its contexts of experience. Heidegger criticizes this position for "not pushing the question back from an epistemological one (i.e.,how we know what we know) to an ontological one (i.e., what it means to *be* a person and how the world is intelligible to us at all)" (as cited in Leonard, 1994, p. 45). This challenges researchers, in light of how we understand what it means to be a person, to reflect on the questions we pose.

Leonard notes that in Heidegger's work, "*world* . . . has a fundamentally different meaning from our common understanding of world as environment, or nature, or the sum total of all the 'things' in our world. World is the meaningful set of relationships, practices, and language that we have by virtue of being born into a culture" (p.46). In Heidegger's (1975) words:

> [World] comes not afterward but beforehand, in the strict sense of the word. Beforehand: that which is unveiled and understood already in advance in every existent Dasein before any apprehending of this or that being. The world as already unveiled in advance is such that we do not in fact specifically occupy ourselves with it, or apprehend it, but instead it is so self-evident, so much a matter of course, that we are completely oblivious to it. (p. 165)

This notion of the self as contained by world is fundamentally different from the Cartesian idea of self as possession. Leonard contends that the self of possession is the modern subject: "autonomous, disengaged, disembodied, rationally choosing his [sic] actions based on explicit, cognitively-held principles and values" (p. 47). The self of possession has a body and characteristics that belong to it. Heidegger argues that the only way we can hold this understanding is by not recognizing that it is world that determines our choices and constructs our possibilities.

According to Leonard (1994) Heidegger uses the term "throwness" as a way of describing his understanding of the person as "always already situated, as being-in-the-world" (p. 47) and therefore not totally free to make meaning. As a result of this "situated existence" humans work out of the possibilities that exist for them by virtue of our being "thrown" into a particular cultural, historical, and familial world. Leonard observes that for Heidegger, freedom is a situated freedom, whereas for the Cartesian radically free self, values and purposes are the products of choice. Leonard further comments that:

> Heidegger argues that the detached, reflective mode of knowing the world exemplified by Descartes is *dependent on* the a priori existence of world in which the meaning given in our language and culture is what makes things show up for us at all. The taken-for-granted, involved skills and practices of what Heidegger calls the ready-to-hand mode are presupposed by the abstract, theoretical, reflective knowledge that Heidegger calls the present-at-hand mode, which is what we more commonly know as theoretical knowing. (p. 48)

Heidegger's (1962) now famous example of the hammer exemplifies this. When a hammer is used it is not used in an abstract or theoretical manner. Rather, it is used in an assumed, "taken-for-granted" way until it breaks or no longer serves the intended purpose. Only when an appreciation is gained for what it is not doing can there be an understanding of its "taken-for-granted," "ready-to-hand mode" (p. 69). For Leonard, Heidegger's example of the hammer is a demonstration of the hermeneutical objection to the emphasis in Western culture on the primacy of the abstract, "present-at-hand" mode. According to Leonard, Western culture ignores the "taken-for-granted," lived experience of our specific daily experiences, and therefore misses the meaning that is made comprehensible through the linguistic and cultural skills and practices given by the world.

Leonard observes that a second essential aspect of person from a hermeneutical perspective is that a person is a being for whom things have significance and value. As Heidegger (1975) explains:

> [Dasein] *finds itself* primarily and constantly *in things* because, tending them, distressed by them, it always in some way or other rests in things. Each one of us is what he [sic] pursues and cares for. In everyday terms we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. (p. 158)

Therefore, Leonard notes that to understand a person's behaviour or expressions, the individual has to be studied in context. Only in context can the things a person values and finds significant be determined. As an example, I am working with a counselling student who is feeling discouraged in his or her learning. When the student begins to use the word "hope" I could assume that there are positive feelings about the work. Upon further conversation, I discover that for the student, hope is a word that holds numerous experiences in which he or she has felt set up to be let down. So for the student, it is not safe to feel hopeful. When I understand the context then a more appropriate interpretation is possible.

Heidegger argues that a human being is continually moving through both conscious and nonconscious processes of interpreting present experience with regards to the remembered past and the imagined future. Human beings are thus both engaged in and encompassed by this ongoing interpretive process. Leonard (1994) notes:

> Contrary to Husserl, who claims that these interpretations are a product of individual consciousness, of subjects, Heidegger claims that these interpretations are not generated in individual consciousness as subjects related to objects but rather are given in our linguistic and cultural traditions and make sense only against a background of significance. (p. 52)

Leonard observes that the Cartesian perspective sees the body as an object of possession. The hermeneutical concept of a person views the body in a fundamentally different manner. From a hermeneutical perspective, the human subject is not contained by a body but rather, develops the experience of being human by being embodied. That is, the biological body, through its interaction with the environment, creates the possibility for the sorts of perceptions and interpretations that are experienced as a sense of self-identity. Merleau-Ponty (1962) calls this "bodily intelligence."

Heidegger's (1975) concept of person includes a view of person or "being-in-time" that is radically different from more traditional Western notions of time. Leonard observes that the traditional Western view of linear time is of "an endless succession of nows" (p. 53). As Heidegger explains, "The common conception thinks of the nows as free-floating, relationless, intrinsically patched on to one another and intrinsically successive" (p. 263). It supports the idea that things exist in a static form. Heidegger describes the past as "having-been-ness":

> The Dasein can as little get rid of its bygoneness as escape its death. In every sense and in every case everything we have been is an essential determination of our existence. Even if in some way, by some manipulation, I may be able to keep my bygoneness far from myself, nevertheless, forgetting, repressing, suppressing are modes in which I myself am my own having-been-ness. (p. 265)

Leonard observes that in Heidegger's use of the term, temporality describes a concept of time that is prior to or more original than "our common sense of time as a linear succession of nows" (p. 54). She notes that with linear time there is a problem relating past and future to the now, but according to Heidegger, temporality, "is directional and relational and applies only to being, not to physical objects" (p. 54). He explains, "The not-yet and no longer are not patched onto the now as foreign but belong to its very content. Because of this *dimensional content*, the now has within itself the *character of a transition*" (p. 249). Leonard observes that, "being-in-time cannot be studied except within the context of its past and its future, the having-been-ness and the being-expectant by which it is constituted" (p. 54).

Connected to Heidegger's idea of temporality is his understanding of the essential structure of human being which he describes as "care." In Heidegger's definition, "care" means creating conditions in which human subjects take an active interest in noticing and interpreting what it means to be a human subject. He considers this important because human beings are not abstracted from the daily objects and events of experience but, instead, are created by these objects and events. Temporally, what has not yet occurred is of significance and interest to human perception and interpretation, since the future exists within the horizon of past and present action. However, as Heidegger argues, the context that human beings experience is not necessarily or usually of their own choosing. Instead, human beings are "thrown" into a world of experience that already exists. Part of the process of learning to have a personal identity means learning and interpreting relationships within the context of one's experience.

D. G. Smith notes that with this understanding of interpretation, Dilthey's project of a method for the human sciences became problematic. As a result, method could never be independent of the project of thinking itself. Heidegger argued that method could never arrive at a solitary and stable place, where a universal application could be made, because the method carried the same character as it wanted to access. Heidegger's student, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979) developed this idea more fully. He argued that the only way to interpret any phenomenon could only be revealed by the phenomenon itself through dialogical engagement.

D. G. Smith (1991) observes that Gadamer later developed in his own work two other themes in Heidegger's hermeneutics, "namely, the historico-temporal quality of human experience and the linguisticality of understanding" (p. 193). Heidegger saw that human experiences of the world takes place within a structure of past, present, and future. He notes that the only way we can understand the "now" that is new is through the "forestructure of understanding" which has been created by past experience. Smith further notes that Gadamer (1979) pursued this idea in two important ways. "The first, was to reinstate in a positive way the manner in which pre-judgement is a necessary requirement of all understanding" (p. 193). Smith observes that for Gadamer, "prejudice or pre-judgement" is an indication that we can only understand the world from within a particular framework which provides a place for out thoughts and actions to begin. So, if two individuals engage in a conversation, they have to be able to bring about a "fusion" of their different perspectives into a new understanding which is then held in common.

Secondly, Smith notes: "This understanding of the temporal nature Gadamer called 'effective historical consciousness,' . . . and its character is revealed most pristinely in the structure and function of language" (p. 193).

Toward A Hermeneutic Attitude in Social Science Research

In the previous section, I offered a brief outline of principles of philosophical hermeneutical thought, with an emphasis on how these support conceptions of self-identity. In this section, following arguments made by David G. Smith and Hans-Georg Gadamer, I present a conceptual foundation for a "hermeneutic attitude" in social science research.

Gadamer (1975, 1976, 1981) suggests that it is not possible to separate the method for inquiry from the subject of the inquiry. D. G. Smith (1991) observes that "this is because *what* is being investigated itself holds part of the answer concerning *how* it should be investigated" (p.198). Smith outlines four important aspects that need to be considered for hermeneutical research: "The first is to develop a deep attentiveness to language itself, to notice how one uses it and how others use it" (p. 199). It is important to understand the etymological roots within words and recognize the historical significance.

A second necessity for hermeneutical explorations is "a deepening of one's sense of the basic *interpretability* of life itself" (p. 199). This means that the researcher needs to participate in the interpretive task rather than to simply receive the interpretations from others.

A third important facet of hermeneutical research is the overall interest in the question of human meaning. The hermeneutic imagination recognizes how the experience of the individual is interrelated with the larger experience of life. Smith (1991) observes that:

> The mark of good interpretative research is not in the degree to which it follows a specified methodological agenda, but in the degree to which it can show understanding of what it is that is being investigated. And "understanding" here is itself not a fixable category but rather it stands for a deep sense that something has been profoundly heard in our present circumstances . . . . This means that hermeneutical consciousness is always and everywhere a historical consciousness, a way of thinking and acting that is acutely aware of the storied nature of human experience. We find ourselves, hermeneutically speaking, always in the middle of stories, and good hermeneutical research shows an ability to read those stories from inside out and outside in. Hermeneutical research is a multidimensional enterprise, not just a vertical (theological) one or horizontal (empirical) one. (p. 201)

As Smith sees it, the task is to enter into an experience of the human world and into creative engagement that can be interpreted or re-interpreted.

A fourth aspect of hermeneutical inquiry is its inherent creativity. Smith notes that "Hermeneutics is about creating meaning, not simply reporting on it" (p. 201). Since it is impossible to remove subjectivity from the process, hermeneutics desires to deepen the collective understanding of the experience. Smith notes that this is what Gadamer has referred to as "the art of hermeneutic writing" (p. 201). Smith further observes that: "Good hermeneutic writing desires to provoke fresh ways of seeing and thinking within a deep sense of tradition, bringing about new forms of engagement and dialogue about the world we face together" (p. 202).

Modernist research attempts to separate the inquirer from the subject of inquiry. The researcher is to be as objective as possible so as to not influence the outcome of the research. Contemporary hermeneutics refuses to draw a line between the inquirer and what is being inquired into because human beings both create and are created by the methods used to enact experience. This suggests something about how research is designed and also about what is found. What it most clearly suggests is that researchers can no longer pretend that they are merely "applying" methods to situations. Instead, they are changing situations (and identities) with research situations, and therefore, have some obligation to say something about how they think this is happening.

When I was a young girl and taking violin lessons, my teacher introduced me to the phenomenon of resonance. Using two tuning forks, she struck one and put it on the table at arm's length from another held still in the other hand. Almost instantly the second tuning fork began to vibrate without having been struck. I was fascinated! Her point was that notes of similar pitch resonate at the same frequency and therefore an open string will sound when the corresponding note an octave higher on the next string is played. That early fascination has stayed with me and over the years I have learned that the first tuning fork was not simply acting on the second tuning fork. Rather, it was interacting with it because as the second tuning fork continued to vibrate in response to the resonance with the first one, the first one was also vibrating in response to the second fork. The two tuning forks were interacting with each other!

Hermeneutical research recognizes that the dynamic and interactive relationship results in the constant evolution of both individual and collective. Research does not simply begin on one date and end on another. The research process continues to inform the research until a time comes when the research is brought to a close (for example, the fact that this dissertation does need to be written!). It also means that the researcher is not "waiting" until all the data is collected before it is analysed and conclusions are drawn.

In my research on the experience of presence I identified some data sources in which I was particularly interested: a focus group of colleagues, the relationship between my daughter and her tutor, and my own experience. However, even before I entered into the actual collection of data, I was discovering other sources of "data" that were informing my research. Some of these included a library book my daughter brought home from the library, an email conversation, movies I was watching, and conversations, to name a few. Hermeneutical research does not attempt to artificially separate these. "Who one is" is inseparable from "what one does."

Hermeneutical research recognizes that with any research question there will never be a final answer because the answer is being continually created. I recognize that, long before any conclusions have been articulated, my teaching, parenting, and counselling have already been changed through the process of engaging with the research question. This in turn has influenced the ongoing research process.

Carson and Sumara (2001) state that research is something that is inextricably tied to the complex relations that form various layers of communities. They suggest then that research is not something that is simply "done." Therefore, the question of "How does one conduct educational action research?" is replaced with the question "How does one conduct a life that includes the practice of educational action research?" (p. xvii). In this next section I will briefly review the history of action research.

Action Research

Action research has been included in the field of education since the 1930s. Noffke (1995) refers to the work of John Collier, the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who used the term to describe his work in democratic forms of agricultural planning. She notes that it was also used by Kurt Lewin (1946), a social psychologist who, with his colleagues, focussed on issues of greater productivity and efficiency rather than on the "democratic agenda" (p. 3). The process was seen to be cyclical and involved a nonlinear pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on changes in social situations. Noffke observes that action research continues to be used to explore the role of social science in initiating changes not only in education, but in industry, community development, and the military as well as in other fields.

Carson (1989) notes that there have been four significant shifts in educational action research since the 1950s. He designates these as technical, practical, critical, and post-structural forms of action research. These changes in form came about in response to changing ideas of social science and the changing character of the questions facing educators but Carson has cautioned that these shifts should not be viewed as moving toward a more "perfect" form of action research.

Instead, Carson suggests that action research history should be taught dialectically. It is both a resistance to, as well as a participation in some form of social theory, leading to an improved understanding and better quality of social life. Action research is never knowledge that is produced about something but rather it is knowledge that is about one's self and one's relationships to particular communities.

Carson (1989) writes that "action research originally developed with the ambition of an ascendant technical social science" (p. iii). Carson observes that Lewin (1946), founder of the action research movement, critiqued the relationship of social science to practice. He made the argument that research that produced nothing but books was not adequate. He devised the spiral process of "reflection/action/reflection" (p. 3) to apply social science understandings to community development. Lewin believes that it is vitally important that a dialogue exists between theory and practice.

Carson observes that as action research was applied to education, Lewin's emphasis on dialogue between theory and practice decreased. Corey (1954), an early action researcher, saw action research as providing a way for teachers to apply social science methodologies to the challenges of school improvement. He argues that the major advantage to this kind of research is that it facilitates the teachers "beginning to know" rather than just "hoping" their work is successful (p. 208). Carson observes that Corey and others believed that empirical analytical social science was developing a "solid edifice of certainties" (p. iii) about school and social life. Consequently, when it came to practice, school-based action research became reduced to a set of social science techniques, implemented by teachers who did not have social science research skills. As a result, action research came under significant criticism by scholars more academically oriented, such as, Hodgkinson (1957), who rejected it as "methodologically sloppy busy work which had little to do with the actual work of teaching" (Carson, 1989, p. iii).

Carson observes that although action research became discredited in North America, it became established in Europe in opposition to the domination of empirical-analytical social science research. In Britain, during the late 1960s, Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) was interested in developing a curriculum theory that included the notion of the teacher as researcher. His interest arose from a concern that in "the rationalist, objectives-driven curriculum theories that were emanating from the United States" the teacher was seen as the " 'passive practitioner' " (Carson, 1989 p. iii).

Noffke and Stevenson (1994) note that while Stenhouse retained his focus on professional self-development, he also stressed the role of teachers in making professional judgements regarding both the "ends and means" of instruction. Stenhouse and other English researchers emphasized the need for developing and monitoring a congruency between the teacher's intentions and classroom actions. They believed that by developing an understanding of the relationship between intentions and practices, action research would contribute to the development of teachers' practical theories of teaching by improving the coherence of those theories.

Carson notes that the social theory which is the foundation of this second form of action research is rooted in a practical philosophy. "Practice" in this context" refers to the deliberative reflections of those who must act ethically in concrete life situations" (p. iv). Carson recognizes Gadamer's (1981) work, who quoting Aristotle, refers to this as a *phronesis*. Here, Gadamer is making the distinction between practice as *techne* and practice as *phronesis*. Carson writes,

> A techne is suitable for instances in which the ends of the activity are well known and unproblematic. In such cases application means deciding the best and most efficient means for reaching the known goal. Phronesis is appropriate when the specific ends are not known in advance. Application in this sense requires reflection and judgement on the particularities of an instance. Experienced teachers come to know that most decisions are matters of phronesis and not techne. (p. 90)

Carson and Sumara (2001) consider that in contrast to a separation of theory and practice in technical action research, practical research has a close link between its interpretive theory and practical action. No longer is research solely that which is contained within written texts or journals. Research now includes "showing the *connections* between the researcher and the subject of inquiry" (p. xvi). This consistency of theory and practice may explain the durability of practical action research.

Critical Action Research

Critical action research is concerned about the adequacy of a theory that was founded on the reflective practices of educators. Carson (1989) observes that the debate between critical and practical forms of action research "turns largely on the question of 'false consciousness' " (p. iv). Carson notes that critical social theorists stress the importance of outside forces such as class, race, and gender in shaping consciousness which has historically determined understandings and responses. Critical theory seeks to liberate people from false consciousness in order to create schools that are educational communities founded on principles of "rationality and justice."

Habermassian critical social theory underpins the critical action research movement. Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis (1986) blend Habermassian critical theory with the Lewin tradition of action research. They address the question of how one might move from theoretical critique to the required action that will bring about the chosen end. For them, the answer lies in Lewin's participatory and democratic methodology for change. According to Carr and Kemmis, both technical and practical orientations are necessary for critical action research and yet because of the lack of critical intent, on their own, neither is sufficient.

Carson notes that in critical action research "there is not a 'one-way' relationship between theory and practice. Critical theories inform practice, and practices inform the theories" (pp. iv - v) Since there is need for an informing critical social theory, a facilitator who has both the theoretical background and the time for reflection is required. Carson observes that much of the critical action research originated in Australia (Kemmis and McTaggert, 1988) and has been incorporated into both teacher education and curricula for educational research.

There has been a consistent tension between theory and practice throughout the history of action research which has provided impetus for creativity. Elliot (1991) challenges Carr and Kemmis by saying that they "neglect the ambiguities, conflicts and tensions contained [within these teachers'] self understandings and therefore do not seriously entertain the possibility of a self-generating, reflexive, and critical pedagogy emerging as a form of action research" (p. 116). Elliot (1991) defines action-research as "*the Study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it*" (p. 69).

Action Research as a Living Practice

Sumara and Carson (1997) observe, that since its inception, action research has become increasingly aligned with critical ecological thinking. They describe this development as beginning with early questions that are concerned with:

> Definition (What is it?) and methodology (How do we do it?), later questions became more concerned with ethics (Who is responsible? How is power shared? What are the effects?) . . . . [Later] action research became understood as something more than a prescriptive practice where particular ends could be

> achieved; action research began to be understood as a way to uncover, interrupt, and interpret the inequities within society and, most importantly, to facilitate the ongoing process of social change. (p. xx)

As such, action research aims to explore ways in which persons might learn about lived experience. Action research endeavors to better understand the complexity of the human condition and so has become associated with the "human sciences" (p. xxi).

Sumara and Carson (1997) believe that in the broad sense then, action research has come to include:

> Any form of inquiry that seeks to learn about the complexly formed, ecologically organized relations of lived experience . . . . When these forms of research are specifically organized around questions of learning, understanding, and/or interpretation, they are . . . concerned with *education* . . . . When they self-consciously attempt to alter perception and action they are transformational. Any form of inquiry that fulfills these three criteria, we believe, constitutes a form of action research. (p. xxi)

In the previous sections I have discussed Heidegger's understanding of what it means to be human. For Heidegger (1977), "Being" forms the basis for all human understanding. Being is always the Being of an entity" (p. 29). By this, Heidegger indicates that what distinguishes humans from other living beings is the ability that humans have to reflect on their existence. In other words, humans have the ability to reflect on what it means to "be." Gadamer (1979) insists that "being" both produces and is produced by "method." Therefore, it is not possible to separate the method of inquiry from the subject of the inquiry. D. G. Smith (1991) states that "hermeneutics is about creating meaning, not simply reporting on it" (p. 201). In this next section, following the arguments made by Smits (2001), I present an understanding of hermeneutically inspired action research.

Smits (2001) questions whether or not hermeneutics and action research are too distant to have a meaningful relationship. This question arises out of an understanding of hermeneutics as a philosophical discipline which deals with questions regarding interpretation and understanding. In contrast, action research, while interested in understanding, is more focussed on the application. Smits acknowledges that both disciplines are interested in the "genuine" question. One central question is, "What enables or allows understanding to emerge in practice?" (p. 282). To answer this question, Smits refers to Shaun Gallagher's (1992) development of the term "aporia" in his consideration of the relationship between hermeneutics and educational practice. "An *aporia* is a way of acknowledging difficulty (from the Greek: a state of *being at a loss*, something that is impassable)" (p. 285). Gallagher identifies four aporias, namely, reproduction, authority/emancipation and conversation. Smits adds to these the aporias of theory/practice and ethics. Smits believes that these aporias offer ways of thinking about action research as a living practice, a practice that has been inspired by the difficulties of understanding. It is these difficulties of understanding which are the interest and focus of hermeneutics.

Smits begins his discussion of the aporia of reproduction with the observation that it refers to the difficult predicament between methodology and validity or truth. Following Gadamar, Smits (2001) writes that:

> Philosophical hermeneutics is not concerned with *methods* of interpretation and understanding. But it is concerned with the question of what enables

> understanding to occur . . . . Hermeneutics is not about the recovery of existing or previously inscribed meanings, but the *creation* of meaning. (pp. 285 - 286)

Smits notes that some of the historical difficulties with action research have been related to the inability to guarantee that with "lived practice," the process of interpretation will not be influenced by the "forces of control and authority" (p. 287). He notes that the possibilities for action research have to be situated within the contexts of real teaching and educational conditions. He has proposed that critical reflection is:

> Not something that happens as a consequence of the individual setting himself or herself apart from the situation to be understood - reflection and understanding are imminent in the very "webs of interlocution" that we find ourselves in . . . . Hermeneutics challenges the Western tradition of individual consciousness and finds instead the possibilities for knowing in the sociality that language represents. Hermeneutics, and hermeneutically-inspired action research places itself in the "paradigm of language" rather than the "paradigm of consciousness," a shift in focus from individualized consciousness to the creation of meaning by collectivities of people. (p. 288)

While there always remains a danger that action research will perpetuate the power of tradition and authority, it is also in the articulation of these that the expression in language of the lived reality offers opportunities for emancipation. Smits observes that in his experience the opportunity is given to "re-authorize" experience. It is exactly because meaning emerges from the "webs of interlocution" that action research frees opportunities for interpretation. This then makes room for further reflection on current experience in light of past and future understandings.

In terms of the aporia of conversation, Smits poses the question, "What makes it possible to agree on what is true or valid?" (p. 288). He refers to Gadamer's understanding of the aim of hermeneutics as "the desire to overcome the duality of subjectivity/objectivity inherent in modernist thinking and practice" (p. 289). Smits writes:

> Hermeneutics then, is about understanding that happens in and through language, which is always a social event. For Gadamer, the idea of conversation is central to the process of understanding. Conversation is a process of give and take between self and other, but is always oriented to something which requires understanding. Thus truth does not come from those involved in conversation, but from rather from [sic] the process of attending to that which requires understanding (p. 289)

In the aporia of theory and practice, Smits suggests that theorizing in the abstract sense and technique as an application of theory are different from practice. He observes that practice, particularly in fields like education, is more than technique, since the main concern is the responsibility for others; this concern is demonstrated through good actions. Smits concludes that "Practice itself must be imbued with understanding and practice must show understanding" (p. 290).

Therefore, from a hermeneutic perspective, action research can be both theory and practice. According to Smits, "Theorizing is a form of practice when it is oriented to questions of purpose and common concerns. Practice involves the mediation of tradition, and the reflexive responsibility to bring that to language and communication" (p. 291).

Smits believes that from a hermeneutic perspective, understanding always involves application. By this he means that application is a point in the process of understanding where, through practice, we show that we understand better. Implied in understanding is ethical choice and action. Inherent in this is a responsibility to translate understanding into words and create meaning. While there are always ethical norms and standards, these continually need to be reinterpreted in situations which require choices to be made. Hermeneutics recognizes the importance of more universal narratives and at the same time realizes the importance of those narratives relating in a dialogical manner to the specific lived experience. Smits states that:

> Action research as an ethical practice then, is a practice that can open to the temporality and particularity of the lives of those whom it involves. Action research has to do with making informed choices in practice, choices that are guided by a sense of the pedagogical good, which is more a concern about ethics than knowledge. (p. 292)

Hermeneutics and action research allow one to live within the space of practice. It is within this space that understanding is constructed through self reflection and dialogue. It is through this process that more questions emerge and so the dialogue and reflection continue. Meaning emerges from within the particular context. In this next section, I describe the hermeneutically inspired research methodology used in this project.

Developing Hermeneutically Inspired Research Methods

In the beginning when I was considering this research question, I was continually struck by the elusive nature of the question: How do I describe presence? Language seemed so inadequate, too small and never "enough" to express what had been my experience. At the same time I knew that I wanted to be able to find language to describe the experience of presence. At one point I considered investigating "how" students learn to be present but I knew intuitively that I was not looking to create a template that could then be taught to others. I wanted to understand, to make meaning of the experience of presence and at that point I did not know what would come of it. I had a hunch that it probably would be interesting but since the question emerged from my own experience I was unsure whether it would be applicable to other situations.

To my delight, I discovered that both hermeneutics and action research gave me "permission" to reflect on my experience and the experiences of others. My context as a pastoral counselling supervisor was important and that would be where the research would be situated. Through my practice of supervision, I had developed some hunches around the research question, but I was seeking greater understanding. In a way, my hope was to gain greater understanding so that this understanding might fall to the background and simply inform the current work with a specific student.

I used multiple methods, including reflection on my own experiences, focus groups and interviews with other people who were interested in the same question. I also used an on-going case study of my daughter and the evolving relationship with her tutor. Using these methods, I tried to discern similarities and differences between pedagogical and therapeutic presence and at the same time I tried to show how both of these (because they are connected to the development of the human sense of self identity) are learning experiences.

In order to investigate the research question, I was interested in finding research participants who were either representative of the pedagogical or therapeutic interest. I interviewed my teenage daughter and math tutor for examples of pedagogical presence. I invited a group of four pastoral counselling supervisors and practitioners to participate in three focus group discussions to represent both pedagogical and therapeutic presence.

Since the interest in the research question was derived from my own experience, I have included autobiographical material relating to my own experience of learning to be present and my experience of supervising pastoral counselling students.

I invited my teenage daughter and math tutor to be involved in the research project because, as I observed this relationship, there seemed to be an experience of pedagogical presence occurring in the tutoring relationship. I interviewed my daughter and math tutor twice. They were interviewed separately by the researcher and the interviews were audio taped and later transcribed. The second interview occurred seventeen months after the first interview. At the beginning of the first interview the purpose of the research was outlined and permission to audio tape was received. The interviews with the tutor took approximately one hour each; those with my daughter were half an hour each.

Research participants for the focus group were chosen from a group of professionals who were known to the researcher. I contacted each of the focus group participants either by phone or in person and invited them to participate in the focus group. The research question and focus group process was explained at the time I made the initial invitation to each potential participant. They were then asked whether or not they were interested in participating. Following the phone call, the researcher sent to each participant an information letter describing the research and focus group process. The researcher contacted a number of professionals. A number of potential focus group members were eliminated because of their inability to attend at the designated time or their inability to set aside the time for three focus group meetings. As the researcher, I chose to invite participants with whom I was acquainted to assure a basic understanding of the question being researched. The focus group members were acquainted with each other from the broader professional community and they welcomed the opportunity to participate in the experience together. The focus group members were all female and the least experienced member had been in practice for seven years. Two of the members work as pastoral counselling supervisors and as pastoral counsellors in private practice; the other two participants are pastoral counsellors in private practice.

At the beginning of the first focus group, I described the research question, the structure of the focus group meetings, and the consent form (See Appendix I for Ethics documents). Participants were given the opportunity to take the consent form away for further perusal if they wished. Each focus group participant signed the consent form at the beginning of the first focus group. At that time I also indicated that each focus group would be audio taped and later transcribed. The focus group participants would have opportunity to review the themes arising out of each discussion at a later date. Each focus group interview lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

The above mentioned were the planned data gathering activities that I set out at the beginning of the project and for which I received Ethics Approval. However, what I discovered as I entered into this hermeneutically inspired action research project is that as I "lived" it, other sources of data presented themselves to me. In one case, my oldest daughter came home from the public library with a book that she thought I might like to read. In my bedtime reading of Albom's book *Tuesdays With Morrie*, I discovered a beautiful example of pedagogical presence. Also, as I talked with colleagues and friends about my work they would share experiences or resources that were of interest to them in this area. Notes that I had made in conversations with former students whom I had supervised became important again. At a conference last spring, I bought a book that described an experience in which a professional responded in a way that seemed to describe presence to me. I found this person's email address on the Internet and asked whether or not he would be willing to share his understandings or experience of presence. Thus began a wonderful email conversation. At one point I exclaimed, "It's everywhere!!", because it truly seemed that everywhere I turned I found lived examples of presence. Therefore I included both planned and unplanned sources of data. Each has been wonderfully rich in its own way.

After I had gathered data from the various sources, I began a process of selection to determine what portions would be included in the writing. I read the transcriptions, email conversations, notes etc. three times, marking with different coloured markers those parts that were of interest to me. On the first reading, I marked those pieces that struck me as interesting or things I had not known or noticed before. During the second reading, I noted those portions that I was familiar with but still seemed interesting to me. On the third reading, I identified those sections that I was not sure about or did not understand. After marking these sections, I then cut these pieces out. I ended up with quite a large stack of slips of paper. I began to lay them out on the living room floor, grouping them into piles that seemed roughly to go together. I read all the slips I had placed in each stack to see if there was a common theme emerging. As the themes emerged I went back through the stacks to determine whether or not any of the slips of paper would be more appropriate in a different pile. After I determined that there were eight stacks, I "named" each stack in order to remember the general content of each stack. Some of the information in each stack was incorporated into the eight "nodes" that I write about in chapter six. The eight nodes provide opportunity for hermeneutic reflection in order to understand and articulate the experience of presence.

This chapter began with a brief overview of the history of hermeneutics recognizing that since the eighteenth century interpretation has gained a different prominence. Building on the work of Heidegger and Gadamer, Smith notes that interpretation is inherently creative, requires the interpreter to be attentive to language, invites the interpreter to participate in the interpretive task, and has as its overall interest, the question of human meaning. Hermeneutical research is dynamic and interactive recognizing that the answer is continually being created.

Action research endeavors to understand more fully the complexity of the human condition. It is a living practice that has been inspired by the difficulties of understanding, which in turn are the interest and focus of hermeneutics. Action research makes room for further reflection on current experience in light of past and future understandings. This understanding happens in and through language.

As noted earlier, presence is a complex phenomenon that resists being contained by language. Hermeneutics and action research facilitate the understanding and creation of meaning within the particular pastoral counselling context within which I am working. Since understanding always involves application, hermeneutics and action research create opportunities for life within the space of practice. It is within this space that understanding is constructed through self reflection and dialogue.

In chapters three and four, I am interested in understanding self identity and human learning. From a hermeneutical perspective these different experiences of learning (to be a self and to know other things that a self knows) can be represented by what Gadamer calls the "hermeneutical circle." What one learns and who one believes one is as a learner emerge together, each influencing the other. This understanding of human learning and the human sense of self identity will inform my research question of how students learn to be "present" with their clients.

Chapter Three: Identifying Identity: Toward A Philosophical Hermeneutical Understanding Of Self

What constitutes the development or expression of self identity? This has been a major topic for discussion in philosophy, psychology and education for some time. In this chapter, I offer an overview of different ways that human beings have come to think about "self understanding." Specifically, I focus on the questions "What is self?" and "How is the development of self related to the development of one's relations with others?" I will address these ideas about selfhood primarily from a Western viewpoint because current counselling theories and pedagogical practices are predominantly founded on these perspectives. I begin by offering a brief overview of pre-modernist and modernist conceptions of self. Then, following primarily from the work of Kerby, I conclude with the role of language in understanding the self.

I have followed Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler's (2000) structure of "three temporal markers" as a way of understanding the relationships humans have had to themselves, others, and the community. These three markers are pre-modern, modern, and post-modern. While they are presented as separate, Davis et al., note that they are not distinct categories as "within each are the traces of what has come before and the seeds of what follows" (p. 158).

The Pre-Modern Era

The pre-modern era is a large one, gathering together all of history prior to the seventeenth century. Morris Berman (1981) writes:

> The view of nature which predominated in the West down to the eve of the Scientific Revolution was that of an enchanted world. Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment. The cosmos, in short, was a place of *belonging*. A member of this cosmos was not an alienated observer of it but a direct participant in its drama. His [sic] personal destiny was bound up with its destiny, and this relationship gave meaning to his [sic] life. (p. 16)

While there was not a unified concept of self-identity predominant during this large time period, Davis et al. propose that there are some general assumptions that can be gathered. During this period, the world was understood to be an ecological whole in which human beings were one part and where individuals experienced themselves being interconnected with the natural world and the larger universe. It was not possible to completely know this world, nor was there a desire to fully know it. The universe was believed to be enchanted (Berman, 1981) and a central element of being human was thought to be in making meaning of life experiences rather than in offering conclusive explanations for these experiences.

In most pre-modern cultures, humans tended to see themselves at the centre of the universe. They understood that the world came into existence because of a divine purpose and by some kind of spiritual action (Berman, 1981). Therefore, humans were not able to have a significant effect on the world or have any control over life events. Yet, the earth was seen to "demand human attention . . . . Human interactions with the more-than-human world were thus organized by an ethic of care and responsibility" (Davis et al., 2000, p. 160).

Davis et al. observe that since the world was believed to be divinely created, it also had an intrinsic meaningfulness. However, the world would only be revealed to those who remained attentive and responsive to natural occurrences or to those who were tuned into the spiritual beings that governed earthly effects (Berman, 1981). Davis et al. note that from a pre-modern perspective, while the "mind" was not seen to be separate from the body it was not located in the body either. Mind was understood to be something much larger than the individual and the individual would become caught up "in the unfolding of the cosmos, with all its mystical, spiritual, and magical dimensions" (p. 160). Consequently, from a pre-modern perspective, the self was not seen to be "self-contained or well bounded" (p. 161). Davis et al. observe that:

> If a citizen of a pre-modern culture were asked for a self-description, the answer would likely be in terms of relations and responsibilities (e.g. parents and children, status in the community, vocation) rather than personal qualities. Questions of *who one was, what one knew,* and *what one did* were rarely, if ever, separated. (Davis, Sumara, Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 161).

Berman (1981) describes an early world view:

> The most striking aspect of the medieval world view is its sense of closure, its completeness. Man [sic] is at the center of a universe that is bounded at its outermost sphere by God, the Unmoved Mover. God is the one entity that, in Aristotle's terminology, is pure actuality. All other entities are endowed with purpose, being partly actual and partly potential . . . . Everything moves and exists in accordance with divine purpose. All of nature, rocks as well as trees, is organic and repeats itself in eternal cycles of generation and corruption. As a result, this world is ultimately

> changeless, but being riddled with purpose, is an exceptionally meaningful one. Fact and value, epistemology and ethics are identical. "What do I know?" and "How should I live?" are in fact the same question. (pp. 50 - 51)

Davis et al. note that prior to the seventeenth century, the Western world's beliefs were influenced by the predominant understanding that humanity was in "harmonious co-existence with the rest of the universe" (p. 162). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in a period that came to be known as the Enlightenment, this belief was dramatically changed. Significant growth in the areas of industrialization, science and medicine, and the development of the nation-state contributed to the change experienced during this time.

The Modern Era

Borgmann (1992) traces the term "modern" back to its roots in the Latin word "modo" meaning "just now." Its original meaning was close to recent, present, or contemporary. (p. 20) Borgmann notes that unlike the slow decay of the Greek and Roman culture, the shift from the medieval world occurred in a very short period of time, about a generation. He uses the term "modernity" to designate the modern era and observes that, since classical antiquity, there has been a desire to distinguish one's culture from its predecessors. He notes three features distinguishing the Middle Ages from the modern era:

> Local boundedness, cosmic centeredness, and divine constitution. The events we associate with Columbus, Copernicus, and Luther shattered the medieval edifice and opened up vast areas of exploration and construction. For heuristic purposes,

> we can think of Bacon, Descartes, and Locke as the founders of a new era, the designers of the modern project whose elements are the domination of nature, the primacy of method, and the sovereignty of the individual. Technology and economy were the disciplines whereby the modern project was worked into a social order characterized by aggressive realism, methodical universalism, and an ambiguous individualism. (p. 5)

Davis et al. caution against seeing these different eras as fixed or distinct categories:

> In fact, within each [historical period] are the traces of what has come before and the seeds of what follows. Although aspects of previous worldviews might be openly scorned and suppressed, they are never completely erased. Most often, changes in perspective are elaborations of specific aspects of previous sensibilities, rather than full-scale rejections and careful study can reveal traces of past beliefs and practices that have become sedimented in new paradigms. (pp. 158 - 159)

This interweaving of worldviews was exemplified for me by my maternal grandmother who immigrated to Canada from Norway as an adult. She continued to hold onto the belief that to go out into the forest at night was not safe because the rocks would turn into trolls and harm her. While in one way she knew that this was not true, she was unable to let go of the belief that the forest was enchanted. While these two world views co-existed within my grandmother, they made her uneasy. She felt that her ongoing belief in trolls was "bad" in light of her Christian faith. However, try as she might, these two world views remained in an uncomfortable tension.

As the Western world was beginning to embrace new features of modernity, the focus moved away from discovering the ways in which the natural world was woven together and toward defining the ways in which they were different. In this period, research became more analytical. Analysis and analytic inquiry are derived from the term meaning "to cut apart" or "to dismember" (Davis et al., 2000, p. 162). This emphasizes the belief that phenomena are best studied in isolation. Davis et al. observe that one consequence of this in analytic philosophies and analytic modes of inquiry was that "the relationship between the perceiving subject and the perceived world -- between the knower and the known --was rendered problematic" (p. 162). With its emphasis on cutting things apart, analytic inquiry endeavored to portray all observation as completely objective and free of the errors that imperfect humans would make. Usher and Edwards (1994) note that the scientific method was seen to produce value-free and therefore "true" knowledge.

As a result, the means to achieve this objectification arose from an awkward alliance of rationalist and empiricist research (Davis et al., 2000). Davis et al. observe that while these methods have their differences, there are many ways in which they are similar: "Both rely on the logical argument, both assume that complex phenomena are reducible to a small set of identifiable laws, and in both cases knowledge of a phenomenon is considered synonymous with the abilities to predict (and preferably control) the phenomenon" (p. 163). With the support of scientific, technical, and economic evidence of the time, world views suddenly shifted toward the mechanical. Davis et al. note that the universe came to be understood in terms of the most advanced machine of the time, the mechanical clock. They contend that all physical forms, including the human body, came to be regarded as clock-like: "logical, subject to manipulation, and ultimately knowable" (p. 164). As Davis et al. (2000) argue:

> The co-evolution of the Industrial Revolution and modern science supported the

> emergence and eventual dominance of a new mentality: Humans came to see themselves as the sole purveyors and arbiters of knowledge . . . . Two profound divisions were assumed here: the mind came to be seen as separate from the physical world, and it was thought to exist prior to and independent of human culture. That is, whereas the mind had previously been understood as woven into and through the organic and spiritual worlds, in the 17th and 18th Centuries, it came to be associated only with the individual thinking human. This shift contributed to a cascade of transformations, the most dramatic of which was a new conception of the relationship between humanity and the rest of the universe . . . . The world came to be seen as something to be mastered, a resource to be owned, managed, and exploited. (pp. 164 - 165)

From a modernist perspective, then, the self is believed to exist within clear boundaries. It is possible to fully know this self through hard work and discipline and it can be discovered through practices of self-disclosure and self-representation. Many current educational and counselling practices continue to be influenced by this modernist understanding of the self and consequently are oriented by the goal of providing individuals with the knowledge deemed necessary for reaching one's potential. I experienced this orientation in my undergraduate and seminary education in the 1970s. In my undergraduate degree in psychology, I spent a lot of time in the lab "running rats," measuring their responses, predicting outcomes and consequently "proving" theories of learning. Having been a child of immigrant parents and living in the time of the "feminist movement," I also experienced familial and cultural pressures to reach my potential. That potential was to be found in education and career aspirations that were to be achieved on one's own.

While modernist conceptions of identity do not assert that the self is static, there tends to be a belief in an "essential" self, one that is unique to the individual and that remains static across situations. Davis et al. observe that "although one's relationships, behaviours, and thoughts may vary dramatically across such roles, one's identity is not seen to vary or to be context-sensitive. Rather, such roles are seen as aspects of a multifaceted, but unified person" (p. 167). Therefore, from a modernist perspective, the highest achievement is to be "a self-made person, independent and in touch with who one is" (p. 167).

As I mentioned earlier, this was certainly my experience in my family and other relationships. In the mid 1970s I found myself at seminary at the time when the church had just made the decision to ordain women. I was seen as a very good candidate to be the first woman in my denomination to be ordained because I was perceived to be independent and self-aware. These perceptions puzzled me because I had not come to seminary to make a statement or "to carry the flag for women." In fact, I was quite surprised that I would fill this historical role and often felt the incongruency between others' perceptions and expectations and my own knowledge and experience of myself. The illusion of success was hard to acknowledge or challenge until other events in my life began to unfold (the scenario in chapter one being but one example). At the time, I was conscious of some of the personal stresses that came with being a "self-made" person.

Many current counselling practices remain rooted in a modernist understanding of the self. With increasing emphasis on diagnosis and treatment plans, the self is seen to be an identifiable entity that can be quickly assessed and fixed in a short period of time. Yalom (2000) on the other hand, makes the interesting observation that it is easier to diagnose a client in the first session than in the tenth, thereby indicating the complexity of the self.

The Post-Modern Era

Borgmann (1992) observes that it is possible to recognize the end of an era when "its fundamental conviction begins to weaken and no longer inspires enthusiasm among its advocates. That is true of each of the three parts of the modern project: realism, universalism, and individualism" (p. 48). Davis et al. note that "postmodernism is defined in terms of what it isn't rather than what it is" (pp. 168 - 169). Lyotard (1984) used the term post-modern to describe an "incredulity toward meta-narratives" (p. xxiv). Any discourse making an explicit appeal to a grand narrative raises questions regarding its validity. Lyotard worked from the hypothesis that the place of knowledge has been changed as a result of societies entering into the post-industrial age and cultures entering into the post-modern age. He notes that this transition has been occurring since the 1950s. Rather than promoting consensus, Lytoard sees dissension as a means to question the status quo. Dialogue would be the means to either break the rules or invent new ones. Usher and Edwards (1994) observe that:

> There is an increasing recognition that all knowledge-claims are partial, local, and specific rather than universal and historical, and that they are always imbued with power and normative interests - indeed that what characterises modernity is precisely the concealing of the partiality and rootedness of knowledge - claims in the cloak of universality and value-neutrality. Thus in post-modernity there is a rejection of universal and transcendental foundations of knowledge and thought, and a heightened awareness of the significance of language, discourse and socio-cultural locatedness in the making of any knowledge claim. (p. 10)

Belsey (2002) observes that, in the last one hundred years, as a result of political groups not only defending their truth, but being willing to perpetrate devastating violence on those who do not agree, many people are willing to give up on truth. A common response to this situation has been to determine that truth exists as the property of the individual. In other words, "It's what's true for me", or "It's what I believe" (p. 72). Truth, then, becomes a purely personal matter.

Belsey suggests that an alternative to this individualized viewpoint is to recognize that "if the self is an effect of culture, a result of the circulation of meanings in the symbolic order, rather than their origin, subjectivity is more likely to reproduce the uncertainties and the range of beliefs that are encountered than to resolve them" (p. 72). Davis et al. observe that in postmodern discourse it is important to recognize that one's knowledge of things and one's knowledge of self do not pre-exist one another. Rather, these are "continually co-emergent phenomena" (p. 169). Davis et al. argue that understandings of the self are developed around a belief that personal identity emerges and unfolds from a variety of "signifying systems that include oral and written language, paintings, television, the Internet, all forms of media advertising, songs, dances, gestures, and so on" (p.169). Post-modern understandings of the self contend that personal identity "emerges from and is embedded in these various systems of representation" (p. 169).

They note that from a post-modern perspective, the self is always fluid and shifting. Identity emerges from what is remembered, what is represented in the present, and what is imagined in the future. From this perspective, the self is not isolated or fixed but rather is fluid and contextual. Davis et al. write:

> The suggestion that identities are in flux does not mean that they are fragmented and incoherent. What is rejected in post-modern conceptions of the self is not the idea of a stable identity, but of a fixed identity. Post-modern discourses do not

> accept the modernist assumption that the self exists in some essential form that remains unchanged as it passes through experience. Instead, one's sense of personal identity is understood to emerge from one's involvements in signifying systems and practices -- and in some ways to be contained in these systems and practices. (p. 170)

This sense of personal identity emerging from one's involvements leads to a different understanding of technology. Franklin (1990) contends that technology as we normally understand that word has "acted to reorder and restructure social relations, not only affecting the relations between social groups, but also the relations between nations and individuals, and between all of us and the environment" (p. 13).

Franklin notes that this shift in the use of technology is basically "anti-people" (p. 76). She observes that people are often seen as the source of problems whereas technology is seen as the source of the solutions. She offers the example of the factory owner who determines that his workers are too slow or unreliable and so replaces them with machines. Franklin argues that the use of technology could have been different if the emphasis had been on human development rather than technological development. Davis et al. note that here technology refers to more than physical tools. "The word technology emerges from the ancient Greek *techne*. The original meaning was closer to 'bringing forth' than 'manufacturing' " (p. 170). Following Foucault (1988) they conclude that if we see technology as "all developed procedures related to the making (or bringing forth) of individual and collective identities . . . . [then] language appears to be the most self-making technology . . . . [since] it enables our limited capacities to gather ideas and note relationships" (p. 171). Hutton (1988) contrasts Foucault's understanding of the self with Freud's. Freud searched for a "lost self" which was formed but for the most part forgotten as a result of early life experiences. Freud believed that one's identity was formed as a consequence of behavioural patterns that were a result of the psyche's engagement with these past experiences. Many of these past experiences were "lost" to the unconscious mind. Freud developed psychoanalysis as a means by which the unconscious mind could reveal these hidden experiences and so the individual might understand the source of any impairment. He believed that psychoanalysis could re-establish the broken connections between the past and the present and thereby restore to the psyche the integrity of its identity. Through psychoanalysis the ego would become more fully aware of the psyche's life history and the power of the self would be asserted. Hutton observes that Foucault approached the problem of the psyche from the opposite direction. Foucault's assessment of this issue was heavily influenced by his study of asylums. He was concerned about the ways in which external authorities shaped the structure of the mind.

Foucault observes that, "The 'classical age' (more commonly termed the Enlightenment) was distinctive not for its faith in intellectual liberation but rather for its commitment to the disciplining of human behaviour. The asylum was part of a larger institutional apparatus through which techniques of domination were imposed" (p. 125).

Foucault argues that the policing system is the key to understanding the psyche as an abstraction that had been created by a modern society that needed a more disciplined conception of the self. Foucault believes that, because the policing process required more explicit definitions of what was appropriate human behaviour, it was through this policing system that the modern understanding of the mind was formed.

Foucault wants to show that behaviour that was deemed eccentric in the Middle Ages had become intolerable in the eighteenth century. He believes that the idea of sanity was a historical definition that was imposed by a process ever more demanding of behavioural conformity. In its demands, the policing process creates a mentality that interprets every activity in terms of opposites, that is, sanity and insanity, health and sickness, etc. Therefore, in contrast to Freud who felt human nature was a hidden reality that required psychoanalysis, Foucault believes that it is through the construction of modes of discourse and of action that we shape the conception of human nature.

Foucault challenges Freud's claim to the originality of psychoanalysis by tracing the antecedents of modern asylums and seeks to establish links between modern psychoanalysis and the historical practices of self-analysis. He retraces the seventeenth century confessional practices to the fourth or fifth century practices of the Christian Roman Empire. However, even these confessional practices can be traced to the earlier practices of the Stoics. The Stoics' techniques were focussed on self-care rather than on the self-denial of the later Christians. Consequently, the Stoic techniques were focussed on supporting one to cope with the realities of the world rather than to prepare for a spiritual world after death. Foucault contends that one can continue to trace these practices back and in fact there is no starting point. Hutton notes:

> Humankind's point of departure for self-understanding Foucault contends, begins today, not in some hypothetical beginning of historical time. Each day we make ourselves anew in fresh formulations . . . . Foucault argues that we discover our identity not by fathoming the original meaning of behaviour precedents, as Freud taught, but rather by deconstructing the formalities through which we endlessly examine, evaluate, and classify our experiences. (pp.134 - 137)

Freud explained how knowledge gives power over the self whereas, Foucault demonstrates how power shapes the understanding of the self. Foucault argues that past experiences do not shape humans irrevocably as Freud believed, but rather, humans continually reshape the past to conform to present creative needs.

Foucault would agree that, while Freud's psychoanyalytic method reveals significant meanings, none of these provide a definitive understanding of the self. The meanings that are drawn from memories are only partial truths. Therefore, the search for truth within the psyche is futile since the psyche can only reveal images that have been created to describe the self. Consequently, the meaning of the self is less important than the methods that are used to understand it. For Foucault, the journey to self-understanding is without end. Hutton (1988) observes that in Foucault's understanding:

> We are condemned to a quest for meaning whose meaning is that our human nature is continually being reconstituted by the forms that we create along the way. The responsibility to create meanings and values anew is a perpetual task but nonetheless the foundation of all human endeavor . . . . It is through such creativity that our power is revealed and it is in our capacity to use it well that our destiny lies. (p. 140)

Kerby (1991) addresses the nature and function of language. He refers, not to a grammatical concern but rather to the role that language plays as an important formative part of our reality. According to Kerby, in the nineteenth century there was increasing interest in both language and expression as central to the human subject. Kerby notes Nietzche's (1968) observation that "language dramatically replaces this human subject with its own subtle web of metaphorical transformations" (p. 2). In the twentieth century, Heidegger (1962) noted that language could not be disentangled from the world. This idea was summarized in Heidegger's (1977) often quoted phrase, "Language is the house of being" (p. 47). Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979) echoes this in his statement that "Being that can be understood is language" (p. 284).

What is the relationship between language and the self or between one's life story and the subject of that story? In answering those questions, Kerby presents a model of the human subject that takes:

> Acts of *self-narration* not only as descriptive of the self but, more importantly as *fundamental to the emergence and reality of that subject* . . . . The person is therefore conceived of as an embodied subject . . . . On a narrative account, the self is to be construed not as a pre-linguistic given that merely employs language, much as we might employ a tool, but rather as a product of language -- what might be called the *implied subject* of self-referring utterances. (p. 4).

By self, Kerby (1991) means:

> The distinct individual that we usually take ourselves to be, an individual, therefore, that also knows itself to be. Associated with this selfhood are modes of address such as *I, me, myself, we.* Selfhood also traditionally entails a degree of identity, of self-identity over time. This self-identity involves believing or otherwise experiencing oneself to be, at least roughly the same throughout a temporal span . . . . The subject's understanding of itself is, as contemporary hermeneutics teaches, mediated primarily through language, where language is taken to be the social medium par excellence . . . . The self as implied subject, appears to be inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits. The important point is that it is from this story that a sense of self is generated. (pp. 4 - 6)

Self-understanding and self-identity as Kerby describes, depend on one's personal narrative remaining coherent and continuous. Crisis situations and other turning points in life evoke questions of identity and self-understanding. At these times individuals are required to reassess their understandings of self. It is at these times that individuals may discover that their previously held belief in their identity as continuous and unchanging, was nothing more than an old story.

Kerby further notes that human existence both individually and collectively is embedded in an ongoing history. In the telling of that history from an autobiographical perspective, individuals recognizes themselves as "the implied subject generated by the narrative" (p. 7)

He argues that as the individual participates in self-narration, it is not simply a mirroring of the past but rather is an interpretive activity. Kerby writes, "The meaning of the past is not something that is fixed and final but something that is being continually prefigured and updated in the present" (p. 7). It is through reflection that the past is actively assigned to the self. However, this is always an interpretation of the past which is selective and always retells the past from the perspective of the present.

It is this narrated past that best generates a sense of personal identity. Memory is directed by the individual's interest in the current experience. Kerby observes that "what we regularly remember from the distant past is often just a repeatable token or icon taken for the real thing" (p. 28). What then becomes important is the meaning of the past for the individual now. Kerby contends that what makes personal identity, personal is that it identifies life with all its particularities. Some of the meaning of life is gained through the past story and this meaning can only be adequately grasped in a narrative or story-like framework. He notes Gadamer's hermeneutic principle of "effective history" and writes:

> We are finite historical beings whose understanding is mediated by and made possible through our history. We have no transcendental standpoint from which the past may be seen without the interference of "subjectivity" (the present). This

> means that there never was such a pristine or finished meaning to the past; a supposedly "true" meaning that we ought now to recapture or coincide with, that we might once and for all pin down. In matters of the past we cannot escape the historicity of our gaze and our interests. However, this position need not lead to a total relativism where anything goes, where an interpretation will do, for the past we would recapture is woven into the same fabric that guides our understanding . . . . The past . . . if our analyses are correct, should be viewed as part of our lives, and because life is unfinished so is the meaning of the past. (p. 31)

Therefore, the self is seen to be constructed through language and social contact, as being a coming together of meaning rather than an unchanging entity.

Kerby also contends that, unlike most of philosophy which is often interested in answering the question of what the self is, it is also important to answer the question of who the self is. Hannah Arendt (1981) believes that the difference between who and what a person is of particular importance. "What" a person is can be answered in terms of attributes and qualities. She gives the examples of brain surgeon, engineer, brave, thoughtful, intuitive and so on. She also observes these are attributes or qualities that one individual might share with numerous other persons. This does not tell us much about "who" the individual is. Arendt (1981) suggests that:

> Who *somebody* is or was we can only know by knowing the story of which he [sic] is himself [sic] the hero - his [sic] biography, in other words; everything else we know of him [sic], including the work he [sic] may have produced and left behind, tell us only *what* he [sic] is or was. (p. 186)

Davis et al. observe that throughout history, human experience has been interpreted through the most recent discoveries, whether it was understanding the human body as a well-made clock or most recently understanding the human mind as computer or learning as "inputting information." Underlying all these associations is the assumption that humans are machines and that our world can be understood from a mechanical perspective. While great intellectual discoveries have been gained from this perspective, it has created a tendency for fragmentation and reduction which has failed to recognize the differences between things which are complicated and phenomena which are complex.

Davis et al. contend it is possible to understand all complicated systems such as, clocks, engines, or computers through a knowledge of their parts. However, some complex systems cannot be fully understood from examining their particular elements because these elements are alive and dynamic. The boundaries of complex systems are much less clear than those of complicated systems. It is much easier to know where a machine, like a car stops than where an economic system, or a relationship between two individuals begins and ends. Davis et al. argue that in order to "understand the identity of a complex system, one must look at its embeddedness and its intertwining, not at its boundaries" (p. 174).

Davis et al. note that knowing how complicated and complex forms are so significantly different creates an important new way of understanding human identity. They observe:

> Events of self-identification are not always about distinguishing an "I" from a "not-I." In fact, it may be that most events of self identification are about becoming part of a "we" . . . . . These ideas recall the premodern conception of Mind and challenges the modernist conception that identity is contained in a physical body. They also elaborate post-modern conceptions of self by embracing

> the idea that culture and sociality shape identity, and adding that there are also biological influences. In order to understand human identity, attention must be given to the complex ways that culture and biology become entwined in one's experiences. (pp. 174-175)

In explaining this idea, Davis et al. argue:

> These more complex views of self-making do not deny individual experiences of consciousness, experience, or subjectivity . . . . Quite the contrary, in fact: An ecological post-modern view of existence *relies* on the uniqueness of individuals. In order for complex systems to remain viable, there must be diversity among the agents that comprise the system . . . . From this perspective, the experience of human identity is not something that precedes the individual's interactions with/in the world (a modernist conception) nor is it something that is imposed by prevailing cultural sensibilities (a postmodernist conception). Rather, identity emerges within complex systems - which include the subhuman, social collectives and the more-than-human. (pp. 175-176)

According to Merleau-Ponty (1978), we do not first come to know ourselves and our situation before we come to know the other. We do not come to know others by watching them and making comparisons to ourselves. Rather, our sense of self co-emerges with our interactions with others and with things within the experience of living with them. To illustrate this, he used dialogue as an example:

> In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thoughts and his [sic] are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the

> discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. (p. 354)

Only later, as the speakers each reflect on the conversation, does it appear as one's personal activity, and only then does it become part of a personal history. Only later, do these events come to be understood as comprising some aspect of the mind, some aspect of the sense of self.

Sumara (1996) explains that:

> Relationality is always and forever based on acts of perception and interpretation. Once we locate the trace, we begin to try to understand. It is only through these inter-subjective relations -- these acts of reading others and being read by them -- that we can have any individual experience of self. In order to experience a sense of self, we need to experience some relation between self and others. This helps us to understand three things: First, that the self can never be imprisoned in the body. It exists in the largely invisible relations among others, within the culturally-made artifacts that emerge from the natural world, out of the conditions of our "throw-ness" in the world, and from the historically-effected conditions of all of these. Second, it helps to explain the phenomenon of inter-subjective desire, for it is clear that without relations with others, we cannot really have a sense of self. The sense of self simply will not emerge on its own. It is not a given; only the potential is given. Without relations with others we would never learn language; the world would have no meaning. As adults, we realize that the continual evolution of the self requires inter-subjective relations that facilitate these ongoing re-readings and re-writings of the self. Finally, the importance of historical "collecting" places for

> the knowledge which has emerged from the interaction of selves, can be more clearly understood. (pp. 60 - 61)

Sumara notes that the self must have a sense of stability or of being "centered" for it to function. Being "de-centered" creates the potential for madness or psychosis, and what psychotherapists call "borderline syndrome." Individuals who do not experience a coherent and unified core self are unable to negotiate the transitional spaces between self and other or their inner and outer experience.

Flax (1990) criticizes post-modern theorists call for a "decentred self." These theorists seem unaware that the basic cohesion within individuals allows for the ability to find the transitional spaces. Flax contends that without a core self, the individual experiences a "fragmentation of experiences [that is nothing] other than a terrifying slide into psychosis." (p. 219) She explains that most of us have avoided this by learning strategies to find "collecting" spaces for our sense of self through our relationships, living spaces, stories and rituals. These spaces create boundaries or markers that help us locate our self in concrete social situations. She notes that the social self emerges in relationships with others, in feelings and fantasies as other experiences of embodiment are explored. She states that, "such a self is simultaneously, embodied, gendered, social and unique" (p. 232).

Kerby (1991) writes that many of our misunderstandings about the self and identity result from naive or misguided ideas about language and the role language plays in our lives. The first problem, Kerby notes is that "language tempts us to posit . . . an 'I' that thinks and an 'I' that acts" (p. 65). Kerby argues that "the 'I' is an implicate of these practices rather than a cause of them" (p. 65). He observes that linked to this first problem is the idea that "thoughts" pre-exist linguistic expression. He notes a third misconception in which language is seen to be neutral or transparent in relation to what is expressed with respect to "reality."

Schrag (1997) adds to Kerby's work with an acknowledgment of embodiment, that is, corporeality or physicality. What does it mean to exist as embodied? He notes that Descartes understood the mind as something that was housed within the human body, similar to a part inside a machine. He observes that a new vocabulary is required in order to deconstruct the concept of the human body as a machine and to describe the "perception, experience and understanding of our bodies as they participate in our everyday lives" (p. 51). He observes that speaking of "our bodies," "my body," or "having a body" is already problematic because it prejudges the body as a possession or something that one owns. Within this view, the body becomes externalized, simply a thing among other things. Because of these difficulties in vocabulary some philosophers prefer terms such as "lived body," "embodied existence," "incarnate consciousness," and "I am my body" as a corrective to the externalization and objectivization of the body (p. 51).

In the modern concept the human body has been pictured as a composition of parts external to each other, functioning according to the rules of mechanics. Schrag observes that in the aftermath of dismantling the modern invention of the human body as a soft machine, it is possible to encounter the body as lived, as an "embodied who" (p. 54). Schrag argues that the body as a dimension of selfhood does not occupy space - at least not in the same way that a chair takes up space. He writes "the body *inhabits* space; it does not simply *occupy* it" (p. 54). The space at issue is what Merleau-Ponty (1962) names "lived space," "oriented space" and the "spatiality of situation" as contrasted with the quantitatively measured "spatiality of position" (p. 100).

Davis et al. describe the "embodied who" as a self that is not simply a vessel that contains knowledge but is a participant in making knowledge. As such, identities are formed, "amid the intertwinings of many complex systems that span the human, subhuman, and more than human realms" (p. 176).

As I reflect on my experience described in the scenario in chapter one it seems to me that one of the factors contributing to the personal and professional crisis was an understanding of the self that was fixed and static across situations. I had experienced myself as a bright and competent individual and these abilities had been affirmed in many ways. Consequently, I held the belief that I would continue to experience myself this way no matter the context. When confronted with a challenge that was overwhelming I was faced with only two options for understanding myself: competence or incompetence. A complicating factor was an expectation that I would be able to handle the situation independently and, if I needed support or help, that was a further indication of my incompetence. At the time I searched for the "right" response or answer to the family's experience from external sources of authority (for example, books or pastors more experienced than myself). I firmly believed that there was a "right" answer and that my job was to identify it. As time went on and the answer remained elusive, my sense of incompetence deepened. I did not have any expectation that the "answer" would emerge from the complex inter-relations between the family and myself. Consequently, I was amazed when I invited the family to talk about their understanding of the situation and something changed. It did not seem like I was "doing" anything and yet at the same time, I recognized that something very significant had occurred.

Over the years, this early professional experience has offered different opportunities for reflection and interpretation. Sometimes the memory recurred when I had similar feelings of helplessness or uncertainty. At other times it was when I recognized that I was not in control of the events of life and how they were affecting me. Whenever the memory recurred, there were opportunities for different interpretations or understandings of the event. I am not the same person I was in the original experience. In the original situation my life experiences to that time resulted in the particular way in which I made meaning. As I have continued to have life experiences and reflect on them, other understandings of the self have emerged which continue to influence how I understand the original experience. These understandings of the self recognize the ongoing dynamic interplay between the context and self.

This chapter has offered an overview of different ways of thinking about "self understanding." The focus of discussion has been: "What is the self?" and "How is the development of the self related to the development of one's relations with others?" Modern and post-modern understandings of these questions are of particular importance to the research.

Modern understandings of the self are founded on the Cartesian belief that it is not only possible but preferable to separate humanity from the rest of the universe. The universe is there for humans to "manipulate, manage, and own." The human body is regarded as the most advanced machine of the time. As such it is "logical, subject to manipulation, and ultimately knowable."

This knowledge of the modern machine influences understandings of the self. The self is understood to be unique to each individual and fixed. As such one's identity is not seen to vary nor to be context sensitive. The highest achievement is to be an independent, self-made person. This modernist understanding of the self remains a significant influence in most current counselling theories and practices.

From a post-modern perspective, the self is always fluid and shifting. The self is not isolated nor fixed but rather fluid and contextual. Kerby argues that the self is a product of language that is inseparable from one's life story. In fact, it is from one's life story that a sense of self is generated. He notes that self-narration is an interpretive activity and not simply a mirroring of the past. It is through recollection that the past is actively appropriated to the self. This is a very important point in light of counselling practices which often invite the client to recollect the past. If seen from a modernist perspective, this past recollection would be understood more in terms of mirroring rather than as an act of interpretation.

Kerby contends that it is this narrated past that generates a sense of personal identity. The emphasis is on the personal because it recognizes identity as particular to the individual. Therefore, the self emerges from a dialogical relationship with other people and with objects and features of the world. From this perspective, the self is not predetermined but, rather, both creates and is created by social action and by other contextual factors.

The next chapter on "Conceptions of Learning" will address how understandings of the self influence theories about learning.

Chapter IV: Conceptions of Learning

In this chapter I begin with a scenario describing an incident between a pastoral counselling student and me. Following the scenario I review a number of theories about learning and adult education. Finally, I return to the scenario and provide some commentary in light of the earlier theoretical material.

Scenario

Sheila walks into my office and sits down. She appears to be preoccupied with something. I ask her how she is doing. She answers that she is feeling sad. As she says this, her eyes start to fill with tears and she looks down. After a few moments she begins to talk about a dream she had a few nights earlier: "I saw the woman who had run a therapy group I had been part of a few years ago. Her body was contorting into all these different ugly shapes. It was awful to watch her. At one point she looked at me and said, 'What are the nine to twenty-two things you've done wrong with your clients?' I looked at her stunned and she turned into another creature. I woke up just shaking."

Sheila tells me that she belonged to a therapy group a couple of years ago in which the woman in the dream was the facilitator. The members of this group, who all lived in the same small town, were interested in issues of personal growth. As the group progressed, however, there were breaches of confidentiality by different group members and by the facilitator. There was control by the facilitator regarding what were "appropriate" ways to do one's emotional work, and resultant favoritism toward those group members who complied. When Sheila tried to raise her needs and concerns, the facilitator was critical and disapproving. The other group members were either quiet or supportive of the facilitator. Sheila felt there was no place for her, so she left. She shares that it has been hard to live in the small town after this experience.

“It’s interesting that you would have this dream now,” I said.

“Yes,” Sheila replies. “It has been two years since I left that group. The dream must have something to do with starting this new group here. I really want to learn how to do counselling. In fact, that’s why I waited a year to apply to this program. I felt last year that I needed some distance from my own experience and some time to heal before I entered this program. I don’t want my stuff to impinge on the client.”

“It sounds to me like you do know what you need and yet that was something you had difficulty with in the therapy group,” I said.

“Well, I think I do,” Sheila replies.

“So it is important that you name those things for yourself in this group and with me in supervision. Otherwise, there is the potential for the last group experience to repeat itself,” I say.

Sheila answers, “Yes, that’s true and I want it to be different. Karen told me that both you and Heather are really good at supporting students in identifying what they need and in finding ways to get those needs met.”

"So, you're going to let Heather and me be the ones who make this happen?" I reply somewhat teasingly.

Sheila looks at me with a quizzical look on her face for a moment and then replies, "Oh, I get what you mean. No, I plan to be as clear as I can about what I need and about how to work that out with you and the other group members."

"That sounds clearer to me," I reply. "What do you make of the numbers 9 to 22?" I ask.

"Well, when I was in the group there was always a 'right' way to do things and if you didn't do it that way it wasn't acceptable. So, I think it has to do with learning the right way to do counselling," Sheila replies.

"Is there a right way?" I ask.

"Well, I think there is and that's what I want to learn," Sheila answers.

"Does that mean you don't know anything about counselling now?" I inquire.

Sheila looks at me sheepishly. "Well, I guess I know some things from my work at the women's shelter."

"Could that be helpful in your work with clients here?" I ask.

"I suppose so," she replies.

"You just suppose?" I chuckle.

Sheila laughs in response. "No, I know that I do bring some skills from my work with the women."

"From your dream it sounds like you might have been expecting a critical response from me in supervision? Does that fit for you?" I ask.

"Well, I guess so. I guess I expect you to tell me what I've done wrong and what I've done right," Sheila replies.

"And it's much better to have done it right than wrong," I surmise.

"I guess so," Sheila replies.

"That must make it difficult to come to supervision," I say.

"Well, I don't want it to, but I guess I feel nervous about getting it right," Sheila replies.

"It seems to me that if it is about right and wrong all the time there isn't leave much room left for learning. After all, if you knew everything there was to know, you wouldn't be here," I say.

"I guess that's right," Sheila replies reflectively.

"For me, it is really important to remember that this is about learning and that is my focus when we meet. When we meet in supervision I will be asking you what you know about the client, both what you think and what you feel about what was happening. Certainly, I can teach you some things about counselling theory and you will see me working but I would encourage you to take all of that and make it yours. Sometimes students begin by simply copying what I do but for you to be more present with the client it will be important for you to make the learning fit you. You will notice that I will come back to that time and time again in our supervision sessions," I offer.

"Sounds good to me," Sheila replies.

"I find it really challenging to step outside of the right/wrong paradigm myself. I know I still struggle with it and so I don't expect that you will immediately be able to shift. I would just encourage you to be aware of times when you are perceiving that there is only one answer to a situation and that it is important to get it 'right.' Bring those instances to supervision and we can work with them and see what other options might be available for you and the client," I say..

"So, how are you with what we have talked about today?" I ask.

"I feel really good, like I am relaxing more and at the same time I feel really excited about what I am learning," Sheila replies.

"Good, I look forward to our continuing work," I respond.

"Me too," says Sheila.

What is Learning?

Learning as a process that is central to human behaviour has been of interest to philosophers, educators, and politicians for centuries. Since the late nineteenth century, systematic investigation of this phenomenon has resulted in many different explanations of how people learn.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) observe that the foundations of many contemporary learning theories are based on the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. They write, "Plato's 'rationalism' can be seen in Gestalt and cognitive psychology; Aristotle's 'empiricism' is . . . evident in early behavioral psychology" (p. 123).

In the late nineteenth century, the study of the mind, of how people learn and know, and of human behaviour began to be "scientifically" investigated. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were numerous systematic investigations underway in both Europe and North America.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) note that learning has been defined in a variety of ways. However, most definitions include the concepts of behavioural change and experience. Until the 1950s psychologists commonly defined learning as a change in behaviour. However, Merriam and Caffarella observe that this definition failed to recognize the complexities involved. The idea of change still underlies most definitions of learning although these definitions have been modified to include the "potential" for change. Hergenhahn (1998) proposes a revised definition: "Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour or in behavioural potentiality that results from experience and cannot be attributed to temporary body states such as those induced by illness, fatigue, or drugs" (p.7). Maples and Webster (1980) state that "Learning can be thought of as a process by which behaviour changes as a result of experiences" (p. 1).

Merriam and Caffarella (1991), identify four basic orientations: behaviourist, cognitivist, humanist, and social learning. Each orientation is based on different assumptions regarding the nature of learning and the strategies that might be used to enhance learning. Behaviourism began with John B. Watson in the early part of the twentieth century. Behaviourism includes the work of Thorndike, Tolman, Guthrie, Hull, and Skinner. These investigators held three assumptions about the process of learning. First, the focus of study was on observable behaviour rather than on internal thought processes. In particular they understood learning to be demonstrated by behavioural change. Secondly, they believed that behavior is shaped by the environment. Third, the principles of contiguity are central to explaining the learning process. That is, the closer two events occur to each other the greater the likelihood that a connection will be made between the two, enabling learning to be repeated.

Merriam and Caffarella note that Edward Thorndike was a contemporary of Watson and his major contribution to the understanding of learning has been called the Stimulus-Response theory of learning. They write,

> Thorndike noted that through repeated trial-and-error learning, certain connections between sensory impressions or stimuli (S) and subsequent behaviour or responses (R) are strengthened or weakened by the consequences of behaviour. Thorndike formulated three laws of learning

> to explain his findings. The Law of Effect states that learners will acquire and remember responses that lead to satisfying aftereffects. The Law of Exercise asserts that the repetition of a meaningful connection results in substantial learning. The Law of Readiness notes that if the organism is ready for the connection, learning is enhanced; if not, learning is inhibited. (p. 126)

Later behaviorists continued to develop the stimulus-response theory. Pavlov introduced the notions of reinforcement, conditioned stimulus and extinction.

Skinner (1974) understood learning as operant conditioning. Operant conditioning relies on reinforcement to encourage repetition of the desired behavior. Conversely, Skinner believed that if a behaviour was not reinforced it would lessen. According to Skinner (1974), personality is a "repertoire of behaviour imported by an organized set of contingencies" (p. 149). Merrian and Caffarella (1991) observe that:

> Skinner's research concentrated on positive and negative reinforcement schedules, the timing of reinforcements, and avoidance behaviour. In essence, his work indicates that since all behaviour is learned, behaviour can be determined by arranging the contingencies of reinforcement in the learner's immediate environment. (p. 127)

Merriam and Caffarella note Skinner's interest in applying his theory to education. The purpose of education was to elicit behavior that would contribute to the survival of the human species. Consequently it was the teacher's responsibility to reward desirable behavior and discourage or extinguish undesirable behavior that did not contribute to this overall purpose.

Merriam and Caffarella note that it was in 1929, that Bode, a Gestalt psychologist brought one of the earliest challenges to the behaviourist approach, criticizing behaviourism as being too particularistic. He felt that behaviourism was overly concerned with specific actions and too reliant on external behaviour to explain learning. Gestalt is a German word which means pattern or shapes and psychologists believed that it was critical to look at the whole rather than individual parts. By the mid-twentieth century, the work of such Gestalt researchers as Wertheimer, Kohler, Koffka and Lewin rivaled behaviourism. Merriam and Caffarella observe that these views have been incorporated into cognitive or information-processing learning theories.

The key contributions from Gestalt learning theorists to cognitivism are perception, insight, and meaning. Grippen and Peters (1984) write that to cognitivists:

> The human mind is not simply a passive exchange-terminal system where the stimuli arrive and the appropriate response leaves. Rather, the thinking person interprets sensations and gives meaning to the events that impinge upon his [sic] consciousness. (p. 76)

Learning requires that experiences are reorganized in order that input from the environment can be understood. Hergenhahn (1988) states that:

> Learning, to the Gestaltist, is a cognitive phenomenon. The organism "comes to see" the solution after pondering a problem. The learner thinks about all the ingredients necessary to solve a problem and puts them together (cognitively) first one way and then another until the problem is solved. When the solution comes, it comes suddenly, that is, the organism gains an *insight* into the solution of a problem. The problem can exist in

> only two states: (a) unsolved and (b) solved; there is no state of partial solution in between. (p. 252)

Merriam and Caffarella observe that a major difference between behaviourists and Gestaltists is where control over the learning activity is held. For Gestaltists the control is within the individual learner and for behaviourists it is within the environment. This recognition of the importance of the individual's cognitive processes is a significant shift and becomes an important element in cognitivist- oriented learning theories.

Jean Piaget (1966) a cognitive psychologist, focused on the individual's internal cognitive processes. Piaget builds on the learning from both the behaviorists and the Gestaltists. He proposes that learning occurs as a result of physical maturation, interaction with the environment and through a variety of experiences. He developed a four-stage theory of cognitive development. Later in this chapter, I will address the relationship between Piaget's work and adult development.

Merriam and Caffarella note that Ausubel (1967) distinguishes between meaningful learning and rote learning. He believes that learning is meaningful only when it can be related to pre-existent concepts which already exist in a person's cognitive structure. Rote learning is easily forgotten because it is not connected to a person's cognitive structure. Ausubel (1967) also develops the idea of "reception" learning. He writes that new knowledge is integrated by the learner "only to the extent that more inclusive and appropriately relevant concepts are already available in the cognitive structure to serve a subsuming role or to provide definitional anchorage" (p. 222). Ausubel (1967) also developes the term "advance organizers" to describe what prepares a person for new learning. He emphasizes the importance of the learner's cognitive structure in new learning.

Bruner (1965), whose views are often contrasted with those of Ausubel, emphasizes learning through discovery. He writes that discovery is "in its essence a matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to additional new insights" (pp. 607- 608). Knowles (1984) notes that Bruner's instructional theory highlights "three almost simultaneous processes: (1) the acquisition of new information . . . ; (2) transformation, or the process of manipulating knowledge to make it fit new tasks; and (3) evaluation, or checking whether the way we have manipulated information is adequate to the task" (p. 25).

Gagne and Briggs (1979) are particularly known for the way in which they link the acquisition and processing of knowledge to instruction. They determined eight different types of knowledge, each of which has it's own applicable instructional procedures. Merriam and Caffarella observe that Gagne and others have had a significant influence on the "learning how to learn" concept. Smith (1982) has been interested in applying this concept to adult learning. Smith writes, "Learning how to learn involves possessing, or acquiring, the knowledge and skill to learn effectively in whatever learning situation one encounters" (p. 19).

Humanist theories are interested in understanding learning from the vantage point of the human potential for growth. Humanist theories were some of the first to shift the emphasis from the cognitive dimensions of learning to the affective dimensions. This was partly influenced by their response to Freud's psychoanalytic understanding of the human person. While Freud is not usually identified as a learning theorist, there are some aspects of his psychoanalytic theory, for example, the influence of the subconscious mind on behaviour, drives and transference, that have been included in some learning theories.

Merriam and Caffarella note that humanists do not agree with the view of human nature developed by the behaviourists or Freudian psychologists. They identify their orientation as a "third force" and refuse to accept the notion that the environment or the individual's subconscious inevitably controls an individual's behavior. Instead, they believe that behavior is a matter of human choice and as such is under an individual's control. They also believe that the human person has unlimited potential for growth and development (Rogers, 1983; Maslow, 1968). In terms of learning, humanism emphasises two things: the centrality of human experience to the process of learning; and the freedom and responsibility of the individual to "become what one is capable of becoming." (Merriam and Caffarella, p. 132) The adult learning theories that stress self-directed learning and the value of experience in the process of learning are based on these foundational premises of humanism. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are two psychologists who are identified with learning from a humanistic perspective.

Merriam and Caffarela observe that Abraham Maslow (1968) is considered the founder of humanistic psychology. He developed a theory of human motivation based on a hierarchy of needs. Each of the needs within the hierarchy must be attended to before reaching the next level within the hierarchy is possible. At the bottom of the hierarchy are physiological needs such as hunger or thirst. These are followed by an individual's need for safety. The next levels of the hierarchy include belonging and love, self-esteem and finally the need for self-actualization. Maslow understands self-actualization to be the individual's desire to reach his or her full potential. He believes that the motivation to learn is intrinsic and it originates from within the learner. Maslow believes self-actualization is the ultimate goal of learning and all learning should be designed so the learner can reach this goal. For Maslow, learning is a form of self-actualization. Sahakian (1984) notes that:

> For Maslow, learning is not only a form of psychotherapy . . . but learning contributes to psychological health. . . . [and that] while self-actualization is the primary goal of learning there are other goals:
>
> 1. The discovery of a vocation or destiny
> 2. The knowledge or acquisition of a set of values
> 3. The realization of life as precious
> 4. The acquisition of peak experiences
> 5. A sense of accomplishment
> 6. The satisfaction of psychological needs
> 7. The refreshing of consciousness to an awareness of the beauty and wonder of life
> 8. The control of impulses
> 9. The grappling with the critical existential problems of life
> 10. Learning to choose judiciously. (pp. 438 - 439)

Carl Rogers (1969) was a psychologist with a humanistic orientation, who had a major influence on learning from a humanistic orientation. His perspective on teaching is quite remarkable (and refreshing)! He writes:

> Teaching in my estimation, is a vastly over-rated function. Having made such a statement, I scurry to the dictionary to see if I really mean what I say. Teaching means to "instruct." Personally I am not much interested in instructing another in what he should know or think. "To impart knowledge or skill." My reaction is, why not be more efficient, using a

> book or programmed learning? "To make know." Here my hackles rise. I have no wish to make anyone know something. "To show, guide, direct." As I see it, too many people have been shown, guided, directed. So I come to the conclusion that I do mean what I said. Teaching is for me a relatively unimportant and vastly overvalued activity. (p. 103)

Rogers believes that in an unchanging environment, teaching and the imparting of knowledge would make sense. However, "If there is one truth about modern man [sic], it is that he [sic] lives in an environment which is continually changing and therefore, the aim of education must be the facilitation of learning" (pp. 104- 105).

Rogers feels that the role of the teacher is to be the facilitator of learning and that the relationship between the facilitator and the learner is critical to the learning process. Rogers notes that the facilitator needs to possess three attitudinal qualities: "(a) realness or genuineness, (b) nonpossessive caring, prizing, trust and respect and (c) empathic understanding and sensitive and accurate listening" (p. 106).

Rogers (1983) book, *Freedom to Learn for the 80s* describes his theory of learning which he understands as a similar process in therapy and education. His "client-centered therapy" is often equated with student-centered learning. Rogers is concerned with significant learning that leads to personal growth and development in both education and therapy. He believes that this kind of learning has the following characteristics:

1. Personal involvement - the affective and cognitive aspects of a person should be involved in the learning event.
2. Self-initiated - a sense of discovery must come from within.
3. Pervasive - the learning makes a difference in the behaviour.

4. Evaluated by the learner - the learner can best determine whether the experience is meeting a need.
5. Essence is meaning - when experiential learning takes place its meaning to the learner becomes incorporated into the total experience. (p. 20)

Rogers' principles of significant learning and Maslow's ideas have been integrated into much of adult learning theory. Knowles's theory of andragogy is grounded in humanistic learning theories. I will address Knowle's theory of adult learning later in this chapter.

Merriam and Caffarella observe that social learning theory holds that individuals learn from observing others. Lefrancois (1982) notes that these observations take place in a social setting and consequently have been labelled "observational" or "social" learning. While there is agreement that this learning occurs in social settings, just how the learning occurs is not clear and this has been the focus of a number of studies.

Hergenhahn (1988) considers Miller and Dollard in the 1940s to be the first to explore how people learn through observation. In order for individuals to learn they must not only observe but must also imitate and be reinforced for what they have observed. He writes, "If imitative responses were not made and reinforced, no learning would take place. For them, imitative learning was the result of observation, overt responding, and reinforcement" (p. 321). He observes that Miller and Dollard's work was compatible with the behaviourist approach to learning.

In the 1960s with the work of Bandura (1976), social learning theory moved away from a purely behaviourist orientation. Bandura focusses more on the cognitive processes involved in the observation than on the subsequent behaviour. For Bandura, it is important to separate observation from the act of imitation. He believes that it is possible for the individual to learn without having to imitate what was observed. He writes, "virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behaviour and its consequences for the observer" (p. 392). The concept of self-regulation is significant in Bandura's understanding of observational learning. He believes that, "persons can regulate their own behaviour to some extent by visualizing self-generated consequences" (p. 392).

Bandura's theory is significant for adult learning because it includes both the learner and the environment. Behaviour is a result of the individual's involvement with the environment. This involvement is reciprocal in that, individuals influence their environment, and the environment influences the individual's behaviour. Therefore, for Bandura, learning is set firmly within a social context.

Merriam and Caffarella note that Rotter (1954) built on the work of Bandura. Rotter's work is built on two basic assumptions: that human behavior occurs in a meaningful environment and it is acquired through social interactions with other individuals. The concepts of expectancy and reinforcement are central concepts to Rotter's understanding of how an individual's behaviour is acquired. Expectancy is the possibility that a particular reinforcement will occur as the result of a specific behaviour.

There are several useful concepts for adult learning arising out of social learning theory. Lefrancois (1982) observes that the motivation to engage in adult learning opportunities might be explained partly by Rotter's (1954) idea that "people tend to ascribe their successes and failures to internal or external causes. Thus, there appears to be a personality whose *locus of control* (Rotter's terminology) is external and another type that is more internally oriented" (p. 266). Another point of influence on adult learning is the emphasis on context and the learner's interaction with the environment as a way of understanding behavior.

The question of whether or not adults learn differently from children has been a significant question for educators. Some believe that adults do process information differently from children and consequently teaching needs to be adapted accordingly. Others are skeptical about these differences. The study of cognition has been important in the discussion of this question. Merriam and Caffarella note that Stillings et al. (1987) define cognition, "as the study of how people receive, store, retrieve, transform, and transmit information" (p. 159).

When studying cognition, the emphasis is on what learners know rather than on how they behave. This includes the acquisition of knowledge and the actual structure of that knowledge. Considerable importance is placed on prior knowledge as well as on new knowledge being accumulated. It is assumed that adults have a greater store of prior knowledge than children so understanding the role that this knowledge plays in learning is important.

Scheme theory provides a framework for understanding the possible connections of prior knowledge to learning in adulthood (Rumelhart, 1980). Rumelhart notes that scheme theory describes how knowledge is packaged and organized in long-term memory and how this packaging "facilitates the use of knowledge in particular ways" (p. 36). Di Vesta (1987) contends that "schemata" are not just passive storage places of experience but rather they are active processes whose main function is to provide the basis for the integration of new information. He argues that every individual has an individualized set of schemata that reflects both previous experiences and a personal worldview. Therefore, every adult learner comes to the learning situation with a different framework of knowledge.

Anderson (1982, 1983) categorized schematic types into two kinds of knowledge: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is what the individual has already learned and is usually understood as facts. Procedural knowledge is knowledge about how to carry out various skills and tasks.

Rumelhart and Norman (1978) identify three modes of learning that fit the scheme framework: accretion, tuning and restructuring. Accretion is the daily collecting of information that is usually understood as learning facts. Tuning includes the slow and incremental changes in existing schemata. Restructuring involves both the development of new schemata and reorganization of those already stored. It is expected that adults will be able to put to use the facts that they have learned into their everyday living. Therefore, the processes of tuning and restructuring of information as well as both declarative and procedural knowledge become very important in adult learning.

A key assumption in scheme theory is that "learning is cumulative in nature and nothing has meaning or is learned in isolation from prior experience. This assumption has a pedigree dating back to Dewey who said, 'no one can think about anything without experience and information about it' " (Cervero, 1988 cited in Merriam and Caffarella, 1991, p. 173).

Flavell (1970, 1985), contends that life experiences contribute very significantly to cognitive changes in adulthood. These include both programmed experiences such as adult education and counselling and everyday experiences of living such as work, significant relationships, parenting, etc. Other writers such as Knowles (1980), Mezirow

(1981), and Freire (1970) have included the importance of experience in their theories of learning in adulthood.

In the last thirty years the idea has slowly emerged that qualitative changes in thought processes might occur in adulthood. Cognitive development describes how thinking patterns change over time and is linked mainly to maturational and environmental variables.

The work of psychologist Jean Piaget (1972) focuses primarily on the cognitive development of children. Even though his theory focuses on children, it has provided the foundation for most of work with adults. Tennant (1988) notes the ways in which Piaget's work laid the foundation for our current understanding of cognitive development in adulthood. He recognizes Piaget's contributions as:

> (a) The emphasis on qualitative rather than quantitative developmental changes in cognition (and his related "structuralist" approach to cognitive development).
>
> (b)The importance attached to the active role of the person in constructing his or her knowledge (with the implication that learning through activity is more meaningful [than passive learning]).
>
> (c)A conception of mature adult thought (that is, formal operations). (p. 77)

Tennant observes that in extending Piaget's theory to the study of adult learners, the research has mainly focussed on "whether, and how formal operational thought is generalized, extended, and maintained in adulthood" (p. 79). Others have wondered why some adults never reach or perhaps never use the formal operations stage. Consequently, some researchers have proposed new structures or patterns of thinking for adults that are seen to be different from Piaget's stage of formal operations.

Riegel (1973) is one of the earliest cognitive development theorists to challenge the idea that Piaget's theory adequately represented mature adult thought. Riegel believes that "dialectic conceptualization characterizes the origin of thought in the individual and in society [and] represents a necessary synthesis in the development of thought toward maturity"(p. 350).

Dialectical thought explains the contradictory nature of human thought and action. Basseches (1984) writes, "whereas formal operational thinking as described by Piaget . . . involves the effort to find fundamental fixed realities . . . [dialectical thinking] attempts to describe fundamental processes of change and the dynamic relationships through which change occurs" (p.24). Thinking dialectically allows for the acceptance of other truths or ways of thinking about similar phenomena that are present in everyday life.

Riegel (1973) believes that the acceptance of inherent contradictions and ambiguities in thought processes occurs at all developmental levels and not just as part of more mature thought. Riegel's basic assumptions are that people do not have to pass through any of the Piagetian levels to reach the higher levels of thinking within the dialectical framework and that people can operate simultaneously on all levels. Riegel argues that people are not only ready to live with life's inherent contradictions and ambiguities but accept these contradictions as a fundamental element of thought and creativity.

Kramer (1983, 1989), one theorists who follows the thinking of Riegel, proposes a series of cognitive developmental stages that are different from those of Piaget. Kramer's basic assumption is that adult thought centers on both relativistic and dialectical operations. The acceptance of contradiction and different worldviews are signs of adult thinking. Kramer proposes a sequence of seven levels of development with the last four stages representing adolescent and adult thought processes.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) observe that like Riegel, Kramer (1989) believes that beginning dialectic thinking begins in childhood but she theorizes that mature dialectic thought rarely appears before middle age.

> Mature dialectic thought is characterized by an awareness that all thought processes are culturally and historically bound and therefore dynamic and constantly evolving. An acceptance of this premise allows people to categorize ways of thinking and yet also accept the inherent contradictions that these different ways of thinking represent. Ways of thinking then become neither inherently good nor bad but rather are seen as unique for different groups of people at specified points in time. (p. 187)

Mezirow (1994), as a result of his study of women returning to school in the late 1970s and his development of transformative learning theory, has stimulated much discussion in the field of adult education. He defines transformative learning as "the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to action" (pp. 222 - 223). The process of making meaning is shaped and circumscribed by meaning structures. The theory of perspective transformation looks at the revision of these meaning structures which results from further experiences. Mezirow sees critical reflection as essential to transformative learning. Mezirow (1995) writes:

> It is a process by which we attempt to justify our beliefs, either by rationally examining assumptions, often in response to intuitively becoming aware that something is wrong with the result of our thought, or

> challenging its validity through discourse with others of differing viewpoints and arriving at the best informed judgement. (p. 46)

Some researchers who have explored transformative learning and critical reflection agree with Mezirow that critical reflection is important to transformative learning. However, other studies find that critical reflection is overly emphasized and is too rationally driven. This criticism of Mezirow's over-reliance on rationality has led to several studies which have demonstrated the importance of feelings and of "other ways of knowing" in transformative learning (Taylor, 1997). These studies show that the emphasis on rationality is disproportionate, and much more attention needs to be given to the emotional nature of transformative learning.

The phrase "multiple ways of knowing" is often discussed in adult education discourse. Many scholars critique the privileging of reason (Loughlin, 1993; Ruddick, 1996; Tisdell, Hanley and Taylor, 2000). Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) note that, "In contemporary English-speaking society, there is a cultural bias towards the cognitive and conative aspects of learning. The development of affect is inhibited . . . leading to . . . a lack of emphasis on people as whole persons" (pp. 12-13).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) observe that many adult educators are interested in promoting multiple ways of knowing. However, they often are unsure about how to integrate emotion and feeling into the learning experience. They are also unsure of their own comfort level when emotion and feeling emerge in the learning process. They note that Heron's (1992) framing of a felt encounter as the foundation of learning is a useful theoretical perspective that can provide a model for practitioners who wish to intentionally design learning processes that provide for balance among multiple ways of knowing.

Mezirow (2000) recently has adopted the phrase "habits of mind" to refer to what in an earlier work he named "meaning perspective." This phrase can serve as a metaphor for the conceptual and rational approach that privileges the cognitive. Yorks and Kasl (2002) suggest that "a theoretical framework that emphasizes a balance among multiple ways of knowing is captured more appropriately with an alternative phrase, *habits of being*" (p. 185).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) describe a process in which persons strive to become engaged with both their whole person knowing and the whole person knowing of their fellow learners. They call this "learning-within-relationship" (p. 185). They observe that:

> Engagement with one's whole person knowing requires critical subjectivity while developing capacity for the skillful practice of multiple ways of knowing. Engagement with the whole person of fellow learners requires interacting with others through the same balanced mix in ways of knowing -- through affective and imaginal modes of psyche, as well as conceptual and practical. To share with one another one's own experiential knowing . . . requires striving to nurture a field of empathic connection. Such a field of empathic connection establishes a group habit of being. (p. 185)

Yorks and Kasl note that the preconditions of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy. are required for any facilitation of reflection. They believe that empathy is the precondition for trust, solidarity and security and so they concentrate their attention on empathy. Yorks and Kasl make the observation that because of an assumption of homogeneity, very little attention has been given to the way in which an empathic field is established. Learners who come from similar contexts are often able to create an empathic field without deliberately trying to do so. Because their lived experiences are similar, they are able to understand each other's language and lived experiences. Consequently, in such a group, learning through discourse is successful. This appears to substantiate a learning theory that privileges discourse.

However, this theory breaks down when learners are very different from each other. When there is very little common experience it is not sufficient to simply be told in words about an other's experience. Yorks and Kasl doubt that an individual could " 'try on' the other's point of view as, for example Mezirow (2000, p. 20) advocates, without also being able to 'try on' (or live within) the experiential knowing from which the other's point of view arises. Living within another's point of view is the essence of empathic understanding" (p. 186). An interesting example of such learning was recently reported in *The Edmonton Journal* (Howell, D., 2004, January 2). Members of the Edmonton Police Force assigned to the hate crimes unit were asked to volunteer to walk as same-sex couples through a popular area of Edmonton. The volunteers were not asked about their sexual orientation but simply were invited to participate in the exercise. In the debriefing session, the responses of the volunteers indicated the power of such a learning experience.

As adult educators seek to become increasingly skillful in working with diverse learners, this challenge is defined as the "paradox of diversity" (p. 186). Yorks and Kasl express this as follows:

> The more diverse the perspectives among a group of learners, the more likely it is that they will challenge each other's habits of mind and habits of being. Thus, diversity is directly and positively related to possibility for growth and transformation. At the same time, it is also negatively related:

> the more diverse the learners, the less likely it is that they will be able to create an empathic field that enables them to understand the other's point of view, thus blocking their capacity to lead each other toward growth and transformation. (p. 186)

If experience is understood as a verb rather than a noun, then educators are able to examine how they can assist learners in sharing a felt sense of the other's experience instead of merely reflecting on its meaning. Heron's (1992) distinction between emotion and feeling is helpful here. He conceptualizes emotion as "the intense, localized affect that arises from the fulfillment or the frustration of individual needs and interests [and] . . . . feeling, which is the capacity of the psyche to participate in wider unities of being" (cited in Yorks and Kasl, 2002, p. 186). Yorks and Kasl further note that the participatory function in the psyche's affective mode is feeling. Learners enter into this area through mutual attunement, described by Heron as "being present with each other in the mode of feeling, by some form of interactive meditation" (as cited in Yorks and Kasl, 2002, 186). Mutual attunement can be facilitated after "a short period of doing whatever emotional or interpersonal work is needed" (cited in Yorks and Kasl, 2002, p. 186).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) have considered how an empathic field is promoted when there is great diversity in the learning group. They recognize the crucial role of

> Presentational knowing -- the intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns as expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical, and verbal art forms. Presentational knowing provides a bridge between the extralinguistic nature of felt experience, which an individual cannot directly communicate, and the ideas communicated through propositional knowing, which is the mode of discourse. (pg. 187)

Yorks and Kasl observe that presentational knowing as experienced through dance, art, music, etc. facilitates the learner's connection with his or her inner experience and brings it to a greater consciousness. These experiences assist learners in recognizing the emotions that they are experiencing in the learning encounter. With greater awareness, learners are able to develop more congruence between their affective experience and their cognitive abilities which results in a more whole and genuine participation in the learning process. As learners develop a greater self knowledge, presentational knowing can facilitate the learners' recognition and appreciation of an other's felt experience which can bridge difference and lead to greater empathic connection.

Recent research in the field of neurobiology and psychology brings to light an explanation of the interdependent relationship that exists between reason and emotions. This research shows that decision making can occur outside the individual's conscious awareness. Damasio (1994) notes that historically, the belief that reasoning supercedes emotions originates with Descartes, who had a dualistic notion of the body and the mind. Damasio argues that for Descartes there was a "separation of the most refined operations of the mind from the structure and operation of a biological organism" (p. 250).

Taylor (2001) notes that contemporary research is demonstrating a more integrated relationship between the physiological process of cognition and emotion. Brain researchers (Le Doux, 1989, 1998; Parrot and Schulkin, 1993) contend that there is an interdependent relationship between emotions and cognitive processes and to separate them is to perpetuate the belief that emotions are less complex and more primitive. Taylor notes that Parrot and Schulkin (1993) believe that emotions are inherently cognitive and that "emotions anticipate future needs, prepare for actions and even prepare for thinking certain types of thoughts" (cited in Taylor, 2001, p. 222). Taylor further highlights

DeSousa's (1991) view that the role of emotions in determining actions and beliefs is to fill "the gaps left by pure reason" (p. 223).

Taylor (2001) observes that traditionally it was believed that decisions based on reason or formal logic without the input of emotions would lead to the best outcome for any situation. However, Taylor contends that without emotions reasoning is not possible. De Sousa (1991) states that "no logic determines salience: what to notice, what to attend to, what to inquire about. And no inductive logic can make strictly rational choices" (cited in Taylor, 2001, p. 223).

Taylor (2001) notes that recent neurobiological findings support earlier studies on transformative learning theory. These studies recognize feelings to be an integral part of the process of perspective transformation. Researchers therefore recommend that feelings be considered equally with critical reflection and rational discourse. Taylor recognizes Neuman's (1996) research on the development of critical reflection in a leadership programme in which developing critical reflection and critical self-reflection was seen to be a prerequisite to developing the "ability to recognize, acknowledge and process feelings and emotions as integral aspects of learning from experience" (cited in Taylor, 2001, p. 225). Taylor highlights that feelings are often the trigger for self reflection and that in this reflection greater self awareness and changes in meaning occur.

The interdependent relationship between feelings and critical reflection has significant implications for fostering transformative learning. Much of the work in transformative pedagogy has been criticized for the over emphasis on rationality and little attention given to the place that emotions and other ways of knowing play in transformative learning. Given that feelings are so essential to critical reflection it is critical that educators learn how to attend to the emotional aspects of learning with the student.

Goleman's (1995) work on emotional literacy helps balance the reliance on critical reflection. Goleman contends that individuals who are able to manage their emotions are also able to interpret and deal effectively with other peoples' feelings. He observes that as a result of their well developed emotional skills, these individuals demonstrate the following abilities:

> (a) The ability of immediate self-awareness, recognizing a feeling as it happens, understanding the causes of feelings and being able to separate feelings from actions.
>
> (b) The ability to manage the sometimes obstreperous nature of emotions, which involves more effective anger management and tolerance for frustration.
>
> (c) The productive utilization of emotions which involves marshalling emotions in the service for focusing attention, self-motivation, delayed gratification and more self-control.
>
> (d) The ability to empathize, reading emotions of others, reflecting their needs and wants by taking another's perspective and through active listening; and the ability to handle relationships, the skill in managing emotions in others. (cited in Taylor, 2001, p. 232)

Taylor (2002) observes that developing emotional intelligence in transformative learning includes some of the critical reflection that Mezirow (1991) delineates. However, it requires much more attention to emotional self-awareness, and one's functioning in relationship. The above discussion highlights that transformative learning requires exploration of feelings to be included in the decision making process alongside rational discourse.

In addition to the understandings of transformational learning, Davis and Sumara (1997) draw on recent developments in complexity theory, ecology and hermeneutics to present an "enactivist" model of cognition. While they direct their attention to the public school context, their understandings are well suited to adult learning. They observe that knowledge has tended to be seen as if it were an object, a "third thing" (p. 3). As an object then, knowledge can be manipulated, stored, and grasped. They suggest that instead of viewing knowledge as an object, knowledge should be understood as action or "better yet knowledge-as-(inter)action" (p. 4). Following Gadamer's (1990) understanding that a conversation cannot be predetermined but rather emerges in the process of the conversation, Davis and Sumara argue that understanding emerges in a similar fashion. In the unpredictable process of a conversation each participant is affected in ways that were not foreseen at the beginning. Consequently, our understandings of the world and self-identity are recast.

They note that Merleau-Ponty (1962) studied patterns of interacting and described the relationships among individuals involved in conversations as "coupling." Maturana and Varela (1987) have named this concept "structural coupling." Davis and Sumara note that while these phrases suggest:

> A commingling of consciousnesses, of cognitive abilities, and of lived actions, none suggests that personal integrities or subjectivities are abandoned . . . it is in the "coupling" of identities . . . that there arises a possibility for actions/understandings to emerge that likely could not have been achieved by either participant independently. (p. 4)

Davis and Sumara argue that these ideas are not new and have been influenced by ecological theorists who have studied the relationships of organisms to one another. The important implication for education is the recognition that seeing the learner "as situated *within* particular contexts is limiting. Rather, the cognizing agent is recast as *part of* the context" (p. 4). Therefore, as the learner learns, the context changes and the reverse is true, as the context changes, so does the identity of the learner. They note then, that "all the contributing factors in any teaching/learning situation are intricately, ecologically and complexly related" (p. 4).

Following Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1991), Davis and Sumara have named this understanding an "enactivist theory of cognition" (p. 5). Echoing the words of Merleau-Ponty (1962) they assert that "the starting point for such a theory is a 'complex fabric of relations,' fundamentally and inextricably intertwined with all else - both physically/biologically and experientially/phenomenologically" (p. 5).

They therefore consider that "learning then, is 'occasioned' rather than 'caused' that is, we regard student learning as dependent on, but not determined by, the teaching" (p. 6). Since understandings are "situated in" and "co-emerge" in complex webs of experience, it is not possible to identify the causes of any particular action. They note that this does not mean that deliberate efforts to teach are not of use but rather that the teacher's activity matters to the extent that it occasions action. The teacher participates in but does not determine the student's learning.

In the scenario of chapter one, I was a new graduate from seminary. Through my seminary education I was "preparing for ministry" in classes and a practical field education experience. Through these learning experiences I had accumulated knowledge that I expected to transfer to the practical lived experiences of parish life. The "crisis" occurred as a result of my earlier learnings not being sufficient for the current situation. I expected to be able to apply the learnings from seminary to the particular context and had no understanding of the learning opportunities in the "complex fabric of relations."

While I expected that my learning would continue following graduation and had a commitment to attending ongoing continuing educational events, reading, etc., I carried a similar expectation of these learning opportunities. I expected to simply be able to apply the learning to the situation. I was not prepared to be part of a learning context that would affect me nor that I would affect. Perhaps, if my understanding of learning had been more from an ecological or "enactivist" perspective, the crisis would not have been as profound.

Now as I reflect upon this experience, I recognize that it was in the conversations that new meanings and understandings emerged for both the family and myself. These were unexpected and unpredictable and in many ways it seemed like I just "happened upon" them. Each conversation affected my self understanding which then changed how I interacted with the family the next time. Learning was emerging in the midst of the experience rather than from an external source that was subsequently applied to the situation.

Commentary on the Supervisory Scenario with Sheila

In light of all the previously noted understandings of learning, I will return to the scenario that began this chapter. How do I understand my supervisory relationship with Sheila? Certainly many of the perspectives mentioned previously have influenced my understanding of the supervisory relationship in one way or another. However, a more significant influence has been my own experience as a learner, counsellor, client, and supervisor (I might add parent, partner, and daughter of an aging parent as well!). All of these relationships have been "occasions" for learning.

I recognize that both Sheila and I bring into the supervisory relationship much more than there is ever time to discuss. I am aware of her "throwness," the larger cultural, familial, social and gendered context within which she lives. Sheila brings all of that into the supervisory relationship as her learning is not an isolated event separate from the world within which she lives.

I also know that there are many elements of both of our lives that are invisible and unspoken. I "listen" for those invisible and unspoken moments. For example, my question regarding her expectation of a critical response from me arose as she had described her historical relationship with the group facilitator but had not addressed the current supervisory relationship. I had a hunch that there was a relationship between the two.

Through the course of my doctoral work I have been pondering the notion that learning is "occasioned," not caused. It has actually been helpful to discover such language to describe it! In one way I intuitively resonate with the concept and in another way I recoil from it. The part of me that recoils prefers to believe that I have some control over what is taught and learned (I guess there is still a latent behaviourist inside!). Somehow this seems as if it would be a comfort. However, in my experience I know that this is not how it happens. There are times when I will "teach" a concept or piece of counselling theory. However, most of the time the learning results either from what emerges in the conversation between the student and me or from what either of us is experiencing. When I am most aware or present in those occasions where something is happening, then usually something interesting occurs. I might not (often don't) even know at the beginning what that will be but I continually am amazed at the learning that occurs. In the scenario with Sheila, I had no idea that she would be coming into supervision that day with the concerns she shared. I had in mind that I needed to talk with her about her progress in formulating therapeutic goals with her clients. As she began to share her experience, I knew that something was happening to which I needed to attend.

Sheila learned in that experience that she could come to supervision and address issues that were of importance to her. This created a changed context for her in which she could continue to address ongoing challenges and successes in her learning. As she has done this, she has recognized other opportunities for learning. I too, was changed by this experience. Sheila's courage to address her fear and anxiety with me changed how I viewed the learning context. I now saw her as someone who was capable of learning in a way that I had not known before. In this way, each of us was learning and in that relationship, we discovered more about the contexts in which future learning could occur.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the various theories of learning. While each of these theories have contributed to the understanding of learning, the more recent theories that recognize the complexity and interconnectedness of the self, contribute most significantly to the current research on how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients.

In particular, the understanding of an "enactivist" theory of cognition recognizes the dynamic interplay between the learner and their context. Learning, then, is an unpredictable process that is "occasioned" rather than "caused." If both the therapy and pedagogical relationships are seen as contexts where learning "co-emerges," then learning to be a "self" is understood as an interpretive process of continually adapting to one's emerging context and, at the same time, affecting changes in that context.

In the previous two chapters, I have presented understandings of the self and how human beings learn. In the next chapter, I address how these affect the therapeutic relationship and the experience of presence.

Chapter V: The Art of Therapy

In this chapter I provide a brief overview of the qualitative research that has looked at questions regarding the therapeutic relationship. This is followed by a discussion of existentialism and existential therapy. I conclude the chapter with the work of James Bugental and his understanding of presence and the therapeutic relationship.

Bergin and Garfield (1994) write:

> With some exceptions . . . . There is massive evidence that psychotherapeutic techniques do not have specific effects; yet there is tremendous resistance to accepting this finding as a legitimate one. Numerous interpretations of the data have been given in order to preserve the idea that technical factors have substantial, unique, and specific effects. The reasons for this are not difficult to surmise. Such pronouncements essentially appear to be rationalizations that attempt to preserve the role of special theories, the status of leaders of such approaches, the technical training programs for therapists, the professional legitimacy of psychotherapy, and the rewards that come to those having supposedly curative powers. (as cited in Tallman and Bohart, 2001, p. 93)

Tallman and Bohart (2001) summarize the research, looking at the client as the common factor in therapeutic change. They note that the client is seldom referred to as a common therapeutic factor. The most frequent emphasis is on the therapist and his or her mastery of and skill in using a particular technique as the primary cause of change. This has been called "professional-centrism" (p. 94) in that the therapist's contribution is privileged. They observe that there are more than four hundred different approaches to psychotherapy competing for prominence. This figure supports the therapist's belief that professional theories, techniques and efforts are responsible for change.

This does not mean that therapists have not recognized that the client's active participation is important. Almost all approaches recognize the importance of the client's involvement in order to make therapy successful. However, Tallman and Bohart note that the client is rarely identified as an agent of change in most of the therapy literature. If the therapist is the primary agent for change then it would follow that the therapist's experience and training should be a factor. In other words, more experienced and highly trained therapists should be more effective than less experienced and less-highly-trained therapists.

While studies do conflict, it appears that the overall differences in therapist experience and training have not been found to significantly affect outcomes. Tallman and Bohart (2001) cite a number of studies which found no significant differences between professionals and paraprofessionals. In fact they cite a study in which a group of untrained college professors who were selected for their relationship skills were as helpful as a group of experienced therapists. They note only small differences in effectiveness between experienced, well-trained practitioners and less experienced, non-professional therapists. Tallman and Bohart contend that if this result, is compared to other professions one would not expect such insignificant differences. For example, if surgeons or electricians were compared to untrained surgeons or electricians, it would be expected that the differences would be significant. This does not mean that therapists are not helpful and that some therapists are not more helpful than others. However, they suggest that rather than differences in professional training and experience, differences in the personal qualities of the therapist make some therapists more helpful than others. I will discuss this later in the chapter.

If, as Tallman and Bohart suggest, clients are the primary agents of change in therapy then it would follow that therapists should not always be necessary. Other forms of help, whether self-help material, educational groups, friends and family, or computer-provided therapy, all should have a measure of effectiveness if indeed it is the client who is the primary agent of change. Tallman & Bohart cite research that supports that these methods are as effective as working with a professional (Arkowitz, 1992; Scogin, Bynum, Stephens, & Calhoon, 1990; Selmi, Klein Greist, Sorrell, & Erdman, 1990).

Studies have repeatedly shown that some people successfully address problems on their own. Prochaska and his colleagues (1994) have spent significant time researching how individuals address their problems on their own. They assert that "all change is self-change, and that therapy is simply 'professionally coached self-change' " (p. 17). They note that people who come to therapy are those who have "failed in their self-change attempts" and who require resources beyond themselves to deal with their situation.

Tallman and Bohart note that "the power of the relationship provided by the therapist is viewed as the major healing variable" (p. 101). They cite numerous studies that consider the best predictor of the outcome in therapy to be the quality of the therapeutic relationship. While this idea is compelling, it remains unclear how the therapeutic relationship is helpful. Tallman & Bohart (2001) cite several possibilities:

> First, the relationship may be healing because it provides a "corrective emotional experience." The therapist's benign and benevolent listening and intervening is inherently healing . . . Second, the relationship may heal because it provides an environment in which more appropriate behaviors receive reinforcement. Closely

> related to the last possibility, the relationship provides new learning opportunities. Clients may learn how to be in a relationship more effectively . . . . Fourth, through the relationship, such therapist provided processes as empathy may mobilize client's experiencing or self-structuralization, which in turn are healing. (pp. 101-102)

Tallman & Bohart observe that these proposed effects of the therapeutic relationship are insufficient to explain the therapeutic change process. Client variables account for more of the differences and they also note that self-help books, the use of computers, and improved modes of self-expression demonstrate that therapists are frequently not necessary for change to take place. If therapists are not necessary then the therapeutic relationship is also unnecessary.

Tallman and Bohart propose that the relationship is another resource which clients can use for change. The therapeutic relationship is a "*resource that facilitates, supports, or focuses clients' self-healing efforts*" (p. 102). From this perspective, the therapeutic relationship is helpful. It provides a safe "space" where clients have a dedicated period of time to talk out loud to someone else about their life experiences, brainstorm about potential possibilities, feel heard, relive past experiences, experiment with new ways of thinking and behaving, discover new aspects of their being, make mistakes, recover strength to try again, and experience new feelings. Tallman and Bohart observe that the therapeutic relationship provides a supportive structure within which the clients' "generative, self-healing capacities" can operate effectively.

It seems that the client's perceptions of the therapeutic relationship are more clearly associated with the therapeutic outcome than are the perceptions of the therapist. The most important aspects of therapy from the client's perspective are: "the personality of the therapist, having time and a place to talk, having someone care, listen and understand, having someone provide encouragement and advice, and having someone help you understand your problems" (p. 106).

Tallman and Bohart state that the idea of the client as an active agent rests on the belief that individuals have the capacity to act on their own behalf. By that they mean that the human being is "fundamentally active, constantly in motion, dealing with him or herself and the environment" (p. 109). They observe that a distinction is often made between individuals who seem to be active and those who seem to be more passive or apathetic. However, passivity and apathy could be seen to be merely the other end of the activity spectrum. There is much research demonstrating the adaptability and creativity of individuals, which further supports the active, regenerative character of the human being.

Tallman and Bohart note that a person does not always self-heal for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the context the individual lives in has not provided the opportunity. For example, he or she may not have a friend or family member who will listen and help explore his or her experience. No matter how problems occur, clients try to resolve them by actively searching and exploring, both inside and outside of therapy. This self-healing process is one of exploring through a "thinking-experiencing-behaving cycle" (p.112). These elements are connected in a dialogical manner and it possible for the client to enter the cycle at any point. A client may first think about the problem, explore it from a cognitive perspective, and then try out some new behaviors. When the client tries out a new behavior it opens the possibility of a new experience which then contributes new information that can alter previous ways of understanding the client's situation.

Alternatively, the client may enter the cycle by focusing on his or her inner experience and trying to articulate it. This then, can lead to a shift in thinking and perception. Strategic and solution-focussed therapists encourage clients to "do something different" (de Shazer, 1985). When clients alter their behavior, then opportunities are created to change and produce new insights. Clients can participate in this process in a variety of ways: outside of therapy by themselves or with a trusted friend or relative, inside therapy with a therapist, with self-help materials, or with computer provided resources.

There is some research that supports the importance of an experiential component in therapy. Bohart (1993) argues that experiencing is the basis of change in psychotherapy. He notes that:

> Experiencing can be either an internal variable (are clients experientially involved in the self-exploration process?), as in client-centered and psychodynamic therapy, or an external variable (does therapy provide opportunity for new learning experiences, or for learning through experience?) as in interpersonal psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioral, strategic or experiential therapies" (cited in Tallman and Bohart, 2001. p. 113).

When defined in these broad terms, Tallman and Bohart note that there is a good deal of evidence that the process of learning through experience in therapy is associated with positive therapeutic change.

Tallman and Bohart observe that for real change to occur it appears that shifts in understanding at the bodily level as well as at the cognitive level are required. Gendlin (1968) refers to these as "bodily felt shifts in understanding." No matter what therapeutic approach one takes, there seems to be agreement that intellectual insight by itself is not therapeutic. For example, if clients knew cognitively what caused their problems or what to do about them and this knowledge led to change, then most people would not seek a therapist. They would be able to determine what course of action to take and to mobilize the appropriate resources to follow through.

As I noted earlier, opportunities for self-healing exist in many individuals' everyday contexts. In day to day living, many people manage to take advantage of these opportunities and make changes themselves. Why then do they sometimes require therapy? Tallman and Bohart offer one explanation: when clients are unable to make use of these opportunities so as to restore healthy functioning in their everyday life, then seeking a therapist becomes an option.

Tallman and Bohart list a number of factors that contribute to a client's inability to make changes:

> First, individuals under stress often get trapped in ruminative thinking cycles which are unproductive in contrast to the generative thinking cycle . . . Second, humans tend to use old knowledge to solve new problems. This may be counterproductive when creativity is needed. Yet under stress, this is precisely when individuals become more conservative in holding on to their old ways of doing things. Third, if problems are perceived as difficult, and as having resisted numerous attempts at resolution, people can exhibit the dysfunctional coping of helpless individuals or individuals low in self-efficacy. They persevere in their strategies even if they are not working, or try new solutions, but in a haphazard, random, or desperate fashion. They may defensively avoid the problem, give up, or blame themselves.
>
> Fourth, all of these will be exacerbated by a lack of resources in

> their environment. Individuals who have good support systems, for instance, are less likely to need therapy. Fifth, to break out of a ruminative cycle, it is helpful to gain some distance and perspective. People are not always able to do this in everyday life . . . . Talking to friends, colleagues, lovers, or relatives might not help because they may themselves be too "close" to the problem . . . .
>
> Sixth, the client may have no one to really listen and "co-think" with them. Instead, the people around them may be critical, jump to premature conclusions, or give simplistic advice. Finally, some individuals come to therapy because they lack a variety of basic skills and their natural environments have not been successful in providing learning experiences where they could have acquired them. (p. 115)

Tallman and Bohart continue by describing what it is that therapists provide:

> First, therapists provide an empathetically supportive working space in which clients can engage in the generative thinking processes that have been inaccessible. . . . Therapists provide a safe, interpersonal atmosphere where clients can relax, take a deep breath, and begin to look at life's problems from a new, fresh perspective . . . . There is evidence to suggest that no matter what the therapeutic orientation, clients feel that this is the most basic and helpful thing therapists have to offer . . . .
>
> A second major factor, . . . is that therapists engage in a co-constructive dialogue with clients, a "meeting of minds," in which it could be said that "two heads are better than one." Clients can externalize their thoughts, run them by another person, and thereby examine them from a distanced perspective . . . .

> A third thing therapists provide is their interpersonal interactivity. There is direct experiential learning that takes place in therapy through interactionwith the therapist . . . . A fourth thing therapists provide are procedures which focus and distill naturally occurring opportunities for self-healing . . . . From our point of view these techniques do not "operate on" the client, but rather are tools which the client uses to explore, think, have new experiences, and generate self-change . . . . Finally, therapists can function as coaches and teachers to help the client acquire new skills. Even here clients can only learn what they are actively involved in, actively immerse themselves in, and actively wish to learn. (p.116-117)

Tallman and Bohart suggest that if therapy is primarily a matter of client self-healing then there are very important implications for practice. They suggest that therapists need to "be willing to listen to clients, respect the client's frame of reference, and genuinely collaborate with the client" (p. 117). They note that collaboration means more than client participation and compliance. It means that, in therapy, collaboration requires that two individuals meet together and co-create goals through mutual dialogue rather than having goals being chosen and applied to the client by the therapist.

Interestingly, these observations are occurring a time when psychotherapy is increasingly adopting a medical model. In the medical model of therapy, the therapist is the expert who diagnoses the nature of the client's problem (illness) and then "prescribes" the "treatment" for that problem. Client collaboration is limited to client participation and compliance within the expert therapist's agenda. Insurance companies increasingly want a diagnosis from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV* (DSM IV) and are indicating a preferred method of treatment for the diagnosed condition. Currently, there is a revision to the *DSM IV* underway which will include a greater number of diagnosable disorders. In its desire to be perceived as a science, psychology is emphasizing objective classification and diagnosis but certainly there are economic and political factors at play as well. One of the major factors is the role of insurance companies which often require a diagnosis to be made before they will fund the treatment. This approach certainly does not support a collaborative relationship in which the client's goals are created through mutual dialogue.

Tallman and Bohart challenge that if the client's contributions to change in therapy were to be taken seriously, then therapy itself would be significantly changed. The therapy process would be seen as collaborative. Clients and therapists would both be seen as expert consultants contributing equally to the final creative outcome that had been co-determined together. Therapists would bring their expertise in counselling theories and practice and would be aware of their own experience in the therapeutic process. They would be able to reflect on the therapeutic process, and trust the client's experience and self knowledge, thereby relying more heavily on client creativity. Clients would bring their expertise, providing their observations on what was working for them in their everyday lives and what was not, and how things might be modified. They too, would be invited to reflect on their own experiences in the therapeutic process and contribute any ideas or suggestions as to how the process needed to be different.

In conclusion, Tallman and Bohart note that the research acknowledges the central role of the therapist-client relationship in the process of psychotherapy and client change. It has been shown that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is a significant determinant for a beneficial outcome within many therapeutic approaches.

Models of the Therapeutic Relationship

Freud (1913/1958, 1912/1966) was one of the first clinicians to write explicitly on the importance of the therapeutic relationship. He identifies three important facets of the therapeutic relationship:

> (a) transference, that is, the client's unconscious identification of the therapist with significant figures from the past; (b) countertransference, the therapist's unconscious linking of the client with significant figures or unresolved conflicts from his or her past; and (c), the client's friendly and positive connection of the therapist with benevolent and kind persons from their past. (cited in Bachelor and Horvath, 2001, p. 134)

Bachelor and Horvath (2001) observe that the therapeutic relationship, later termed "the alliance" has been the focus of development and elaboration by a number of psychodynamic theorists (Greenson, 1965; Zetzel, 1956).

Carl Rogers (1951) was the first to introduce a view of the therapeutic relationship that was significantly different from the psychodynamic one. He understands the ideal therapeutic relationship more as an existential encounter than as a meeting between an expert (therapist) and patient (client). He identifies the therapist qualities of "empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard" as qualities that would facilitate a healing relationship. Rogers claims that if the client is in a relationship with a person who embodies these qualities then the innate healing and growth potential within each person can be activated.

Others (Heppner, Rosenberg, & Hedgespeth, 1992; Strong, 1968) note that Rogers' ideas about the therapeutic relationship remained primarily focused on what the therapist contributed to the relationship. They challenge this focus by emphasizing the importance of the clients' beliefs about the therapist's perceived expertness and trustworthiness. Their theoretical assumption is that therapists have the "power to influence" the client's thinking, feeling and behavior. Therefore they can either promote or hinder therapeutic change. However, this change is determined by the degree to which clients believed that therapists have these socially valued qualities.

While these models emphasize the therapeutic value of the client-therapist relationship, others (Skinner, for example) do not believe that the therapeutic relationship has a significant role in behaviour change. Skinner believes that the relationship between the individual's behaviour and its environmental consequences is what is important. He views successful therapy as "a learning process in which the quality of the teacher or trainer's interventions (techniques), rather than the relationship between the participants, was the significant factor" (cited in Bachelor and Horvath, 2001, p. 135). In the early 1950s the debate between the behavioral and nonbehavioral viewpoints intensified. Eysenck (1952) published an article that strongly challenges the value of talk therapies. He is very critical of the quality of therapy research that is outside of the behavioural framework. He argues if psychotherapy is to earn the respect of the scientific community and the confidence of the public, it is vital to demonstrate therapy's effectiveness using an empirically sound methodology.

Bachelor and Horvath (2001) observe that these criticisms sparked a new age of psychotherapy research. Researchers in North America and Europe were interested in evaluating the effectiveness of different kinds of treatment, using newer research designs, with increased statistical sophistication. They discovered that there appeared to be no obvious difference in terms of outcome among treatments based on a wide variety of theories. This then led to the hypothesis that the facets of treatment that were held in common by the various therapies were possibly responsible for a major portion of the positive outcomes in therapy.

At this time both empirical and theoretical interest shifted to the concept of the therapeutic alliance. The formulation of the alliance concept focussed on the collaborative and interactive elements in the relationship. Bordin (1979, 1994), argues that "the alliance, viewed as a positive, reality-based component of the therapeutic relation, was ubiquitous and universal in all successful helping endeavours." (as cited in Bachelor and Horvath, 2001, p. 136). Extensive research has been conducted on various elements of the therapeutic alliance. Although definitions of the alliance continue to evolve, there appears to be agreement that it "includes those aspects of the relationship that facilitate the collaborative work of therapist and client towards a common foe: the client's pain and suffering" (p. 137).

Gelso and Carter (1994) note that it is surprising given the importance of the therapeutic relationship that there has not been more attention paid to defining the relationship. These authors propose that "the relationship could be defined as the feelings and attitudes that counselling participants have toward one another, and the manner in which these are expressed" (p. 137). Some writers have limited it to the feelings and attitudes of the participants toward each other (Hill, 1994). Others stress what is specifically therapeutic, that is, that which supports progress within the relationship (Kolden, Howard, & Maling, 1994; Orlinsky & Howard, 1987).

While there has been consensus neither on a definition of the therapeutic relationship, nor on its fundamental components, there is general agreement that the critical component of the working alliance is the collaboration of client and therapist in the work of therapy. Bachelor and Horvath note Kolden et al.'s (1994) recognition that "besides the working alliance, the other essential component is the empathic resonance (i.e., a reciprocal understanding) and mutual affirmation (i.e., respect and affective attachment) of the therapy partners" (cited in Bachelor and Horvath, 2001, p. 138). They also note that Gelso and Carter (1985, 1994) propose that the therapeutic relationship is a "real relationship (i.e. the realistic, undistorted perceptions and reactions of the participants) and a transference (i.e. repetition of past conflicts and feelings with the therapist) - counter-transference component" (p. 138). They observe that some authors (Greenberg, 1994; Hill, 1994) have objected to the idea of a "real relationship" because all perceptions are biased. Bachelor and Horvath also note that the significance of past relationships as is understood by psychodynamically oriented therapists as transference and countertransferece has been a place of significant discussion. Therapists working from a psychodyamic perspective would consider these issues as central in the therapeutic relationship whereas others either view them as outside of the relationship or not important at all.

Bachelor and Horvath (2001) observe that the quality of the therapeutic relationship does not appear to rely solely on gradual therapeutic success. By this they mean that clients do not seem to have a positive relationship in therapy only because therapy is helpful. Therefore, the relationship not only a reflects beneficial results but can produce change itself (Lambert & Bergin, 1994).

A number of studies investigating the impact on outcome of the therapeutic alliance early in therapy, have clearly established that if the therapeutic relationship is established early in the therapy process it is a strong predictor of a positive therapy outcome. Bachelor and Horvath observe that there seems to be a "window of opportunity" early in the therapeutic process where a significant therapeutic relationship can be established. If it does not occur in these early stages than it is not uncommon for the client to withdraw prematurely (Mohl, Martinez, Ticknor, Huang, & Cordell, 1991).

Bachelor and Horvath note that it seems there are several therapist attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the quality of the therapeutic relationship. Researchers also agree that clients are significant contributors to the quality of the relational climate. Several studies have addressed the client's role in the therapeutic interaction. While there seems to be interest in the qualities that therapists and clients contribute to the therapeutic relationship there is only beginning to be interest in discovering the characteristics of therapists and clients that could hinder development of the therapeutic relationship. It is obvious that the therapeutic relationship is an interactive one but this interactive process has received little research attention.

The therapist attitudes that were identified by Rogers and his colleagues in the 1950s and 1960s continue to be important components of a positive therapy relationship. These specific attitudes are what clients report as being helpful to them in the therapeutic relationship. Rogers (1969) contends that accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth and genuineness represent the "necessary and sufficient" foundation for a positive therapeutic relationship.

Bachelor and Horvath note that there is some beginning research that therapist attitudes or behaviours, and the therapeutic relationship may be interpreted differently by individual clients. It appears that from the client's perspective there is no single, empathic response that a therapist can provide. One implication of these findings is that if the therapist's relies on one generalized way of showing empathy it may not be equally helpful with all clients. Clients, as a result of their unique needs respond in an individual manner to the therapist's attempts to respond supportively.

Bachelor and Horvath note a study done by Bachelor (1995) that examined clients' perceptions of a positive therapy relationship and found that three relatively different types of relationships were viewed as therapeutic. Almost half of the clients described a good relationship in terms of therapist qualities (in particular those noted by Rogers et al.) Clients felt that these characteristics provided the necessary context for self-expression or self-disclosure. About forty percent of the clients believed that a positive therapeutic relationship created opportunity for them to improve self-understanding through clarifying significant personal information. Finally, a small proportion of the clients viewed the relationship as collaborative. These clients recognized that therapy and positive change was the responsibility of both the therapist and client. Both the therapist and client participate and contribute to the therapeutic experience.

They conclude that attitudes and interventions that are therapeutically effective are ones that are appropriate to the individual client. In order to develop an effective therapeutic relationship, the therapist needs to a sensitivity to the clients' unique experiences in the world as well as to relational needs and expectations that are important.

The research cited above indicates a general consensus on the importance of the therapeutic relationship. This has led researchers to wonder then, about the place of theory in counselling practice. In the next section I will present some perspectives on the place of theory.

Hubble, Duncan and Miller (2001) identify the dangers of a theory-driven approach to psychotherapy. In a theory-driven approach, the orientation of the therapist takes precedence over the client's views. Milton Erickson (cited in Hubble et al., 2001) writes about the role of theory in therapy:

> Each person is an individual. Hence, psychotherapy should be formulated to meet the uniqueness of the individual's needs, rather than tailoring the person to fit the Procrustean bed of hypothetical theory of human behaviour. (p. 430)

Hubble et al. believe that within the client there is:

> A theory of change waiting for discovery, a framework for intervention to be unfolded and accommodated for a successful outcome. Every client presents the therapist with a new theory to learn, a new language to practice, and new interventions to suggest. Psychotherapy then, is an idiosyncratic, process-determined synthesis of ideas that culminates in a new theory with explanatory and predictive validity for the client's specific circumstance. (p. 431)

They suggest that in order for therapists to learn the clients' theory, it would be helpful if therapists viewed themselves as " 'aliens' seeking a pristine understanding of a close encounter with the clients' unique interpretations and cultural experiences" (p. 431). This begins with attending closely to the client's language.

While using a client's language has been seen as an important element in "joining" with a client, Hubble et al., believe that a more significant purpose for using the client's language is that it privileges their particular understandings and underlines the significance of their ideas and participation. In this way, therapists are able to have clients remain in the center and respect their goals and contributions to the therapeutic process. Therapists can then build on what clients already know. If the therapist is building on what the client already knows it increases the likelihood that any change will be maintained outside of therapy.

This section has addressed the importance of the client playing a central role in the therapeutic relationship. While theory has its place, the research indicates that the therapist needs to develop a flexible theory base that can adapt to the needs of each individual client. In the next section, I address the role of existentialism and existential therapy in working with clients.

Existentialism and Psychotherapy

Rollo May (cited in Schneider and May, 1995) observes that as the field of psychotherapy developed, some crucial questions began to surface.

> Can we be sure . . . that we are seeing the patient as he [sic] really is, knowing him [sic] in his [sic] reality; or are we seeing merely a *projection of* our own theories *about* him? . . . How can we be certain that our system, admirable and beautifully wrought as it may be in principle, has anything whatever to do with this specific Mr. Jones, a living, immediate reality sitting opposite us in the consulting room? (p. 82)

Questions like these were motivations for psychologists and psychiatrists in Europe to develop an existential-analytic or *Daseinsanalyse* movement. May (cited in Schneider and May, 1995) notes Ludwig Binswanger's statement that the "existential research orientation in psychiatry arose from dissatisfaction with the prevailing efforts to gain scientific understanding in psychiatry" (p. 82).

The existential approach began in different parts of Europe and among different schools. This diverse group of psychologists and psychiatrists shared a concern that they were effecting cures by the techniques they had learned but as long as they remained within their Freudian or Jungian frameworks they could not come to any clear understanding of why these cures did or did not occur. They recognized for example, that psychoanalysis was valid for certain types of cases but they had serious doubts about the underlying theory of what it meant to be human. They believed that this difficulty significantly limited their effectiveness and hindered the development of improved therapeutic techniques.

Schneider and May (1995) note that this group of psychiatrists sought:

> To understand the particular neuroses or psychoses . . . or any human being's crisis situation not as deviations from the conceptual yardstick of this or that psychiatrist or psychologist who happened to be observing, but as a deviations in the structure of that particular patient's existence, the disruption of his *condition humaine.*" (p. 84)

Binswanger writes:

> A psychotherapy on existential-analytic bases investigates the life-history of the patient to be treated . . . but it does not explain this life-history and its pathological idiosyncrasies according to the teachings of any school of psychotherapy, or by means of its preferred categories. Instead it *understands* this life history as modifications of the total structure of the patient's being-in-the-world. (cited in Schneider and May, 1995, p. 84)

May states that it would be a mistake to identify the existential movement in psychotherapy as simply another school that had broken away from Freud, Jung, Adler, etc. He notes that the existential movement differs from other schools in two important ways:

> First, it was not the creation of any one leader but grew up spontaneously and indigenously in different parts of Europe. Secondly, it does not claim to create a new school as opposed to other schools or to develop a new technique over other techniques. It seeks, rather, to analyze the structure of human existence in order to provide an understanding of the reality underlying all experiences of humans in crisis. (p. 86)

May observes that psychoanalysis and existentialism grew out of the same cultural situation. While they address the cultural situation from different perspectives, they both analyze anxiety, despair, and alienation of individuals from themselves and society, and both desire integration and meaning in a person's life. May notes that Freud described the neurotic personality as "one suffering from fragmentation, that is, from repression of instinctual drives, blocking of awareness, loss of autonomy, weakness and passivity of the ego, together with the various neurotic symptoms which result from this fragmentation" (p. 89). May notes that Kierkegaard wrote the only known book about anxiety before Freud and in it he analyses not only anxiety but particularly the depression and despair that occur as a result of the individual's self-estrangement. Ten years before Freud's first book, Nietzsche wrote that "the disease of contemporary man [sic] is that 'his [sic] soul had gone stale,' he [sic] is 'fed up,' and that all about there is a 'bad smell . . . the smell of failure . . . . The leveling and diminution of European man [sic] is our greatest danger'" (cited in Schneider and May, 1995, p. 89).

May notes that a distinguishing feature of the last half of the nineteenth century was the belief in the fragmentation of the human personality. This fragmentation was symptomatic of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual disintegration that was occurring in the culture of the individual and could be seen in every aspect of late nineteenth century culture. The Victorian person saw him or herself as being segmented into reason, will, and emotions. There was great emphasis on rationality. This compartmentalization paralleled the developing industrialization. Marx and Nietzsche (cited in Schneider and May, 1995) observe that:

> The very success of the industrial system with its accumulation of money as a validation of personal worth entirely separate from the actual product of a man's [sic] hands, had a reciprocal depersonalizing and dehumanizing effect upon man [sic] in his [sic] relation to others and himself [sic]. It was

> against these dehumanizing tendencies to make man [sic] into a machine, to make him [sic] over in the image of the industrial system for which he [sic] laboured, that the early existentialists fought so strongly. And they were aware that the most serious threat of all was that reason would join mechanics in sapping the individual's vitality and decisiveness. *Reason*, they predicted, *was becoming reduced to a new kind of technique*. (p. 90-91)

Schneider and May observe that the compartmentalization of the culture had its "*psychological parallel in radical repression within the individual personality"(p. 91)*. They note that Freud developed techniques for understanding this fragmented personality but did not see until much later that the neurotic illness in the individual was only one side of the disintegrating forces which were affecting the whole of society. Schneider and May observe that Kierkegaard anticipated the effects of this disintegration on the inner emotional and spiritual life of the individual leading to the ultimate despair and alienation from him or herself. However, they note that it was Nietzsche who described most graphically the chaos he anticipated. Freud saw the fragmentation from the perspective of natural science and was concerned with formulating its technical aspects. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were more concerned with understanding the human person as one who represses anxiety and then suffers neurotic consequences. This raised the question: "What does it mean that man [sic], the beings in the world who can be conscious that he [sic] exists and can know his [sic] existence, should choose or be forced to choose to block this consciousness and should suffer anxiety, compulsions for self-destruction and despair?" (p. 92)

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were very aware that the "sickness of the soul" was deeper and more extensive than anything that could be explained by individual or social problems. This leads to a discussion on existentialism in North America.

North American Existentialism

Emmy van Deurzen-Smith (1997) observes that Rollo May played a significant role in the development and popularization of existential psychotherapy in North America. May's (1958) book *Existence*, brought existential psychotherapy to North America, introducing existential practitioners such as Binswanger, Minkowsky and Boss to the field of American psychotherapy. Schneider and May (1995) observe that initially there was significant resistance to the existential movement even though it had been influential in Europe for some time. They note three areas of resistance: First, it was assumed that there were no new major discoveries to be made in the field of psychotherapy. Second, the appearance of existentialism occurred at a time when psychology was committed to being considered a legitimate science. It was believed that existential therapy was really philosophy intruding into psychiatry. Third, at this time in psychiatry, the focus was on technique and consequently there was an impatience with any suggestion that psychotherapists should be searching for the theoretical underpinnings of the techniques.

Rollo May was significantly influenced by his mentor Paul Tillich, whose experience of tuberculosis led him to question his outlook on life. May's experiences are reflected in his book on anxiety (1950) which is rooted in Kierkegaardian and Heideggerian thought. Ultimately, May joined the humanistic psychology field. His work is compatible with that of Carl Rogers and James Bugental.

May states that "the aim of therapy is that the patient experience his [sic] own existence as real" (cited van Deurzen - Smith, 1997, p.156). The objective of existential therapy is to be able to participate in being with others and also to achieve individuation. May acknowledges Paul Tillich's *Courage To Be* (1952) as the courage to accept imperfection. He believes it is very important to recognize that there is reason for the deep anxiety that is experienced as humans. The task of existential therapy is to assist individuals to recognize that anxiety and imperfection are integral to human experience. If individuals are able to accept this, then it is possible for them to consciously choose to live by their own values and beliefs. This ultimately provides clients with significant freedom to live their life.

Van Deuzen-Smith observes that for May, the role of the therapist was assisting the client to become increasingly more self aware and from this awareness be able to interact with others and their world. May believes that insight follows decisions and commitments rather than that decisions come from insight. Consequently, clients need to learn to act on their values first, and then they can gain an insight into who they are and how the world works as a result of their action.

May understood problems in life as limitations to an individual's being-in-the-world. He acknowledges his debt to Medard Boss[1] when he proposes his understanding about transference. May believes that transference is not the client transferring the feeling he or she had for parents onto the therapist but simply that the client is currently perceiving the therapist through the same restricted lens through which parents were seen.

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[1] Medard Boss (1903-1990) was a Swiss psychotherapist who termed his approach "Daseinsanalysis" to indicate the close link between his work and the work of Heidegger. Boss turned to Heideggar's work to find a more phenomenological basis for his own practice and had intensive collaborations with Heidegger.

The objective of therapy then, is to assist clients to free themselves from as many of these life hindering restrictions as possible. May believes that the therapeutic relationship needs to be as real a human relationship as possible, in order to facilitate this process. The purpose of existential therapy is to facilitate clients' awareness of their life and to become conscious of the life they have. May observes that for existential therapy the emphasis is not on the cure of symptoms. The cure or diminishment of symptoms may result from existential therapy but it is not the goal since the presence of the symptom may simply be an expression of the client's existence in the world. May believes that Kierkegaard's statement that "truth exists only as the individual himself [sic] produces it in action"(cited in van Deurzen - Smith, p. 158) is the prerequisite for living a full and honest life.

Existential psychotherapy intends to address the challenges of human life and is less concerned with analysing the internal workings of the human psyche. Existential therapy recognizes that it is important to support clients in understanding their life experience both from the perspective of its uniqueness but also in terms of the context within which the clients live. They recognize that often tensions arise between these two. Therefore, existential therapy is interested in helping clients discover their current experience more fully, to understand the factors that led up to the current experience and to also look forward, envisioning where clients would like to go next. By doing this, existential analysis hopes to help clients recognize their current life experience in the broader context of what it means to be a human person.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes that existential psychotherapy grew out of existential philosophy. The philosophy of Martin Heidegger has been an important influence on existential psychotherapy. Van Deurzen-Smith (1997) observes that the most significant implication of Heidegger's philosophy of human existence is the conclusion that an individual is "nothing more than the focal point of a network of interactions" (p. 178). She writes:

> I am just the centre of my experience. My life is always mine, yet this mineness is profoundly problematic, for it is generated through my connection to that which is not me. I, inevitably, deeply care: for I am nothing without my relationship to the world of things and people. I am preoccupied with what happens in my world and with what is there. I am concerned about the people I encounter. It is part of my basic nature to be, in this way, linked to everything and everyone around me. I am, more than anything, an emptiness which only comes to life in the process of resonating with what I encounter. I am, in a way, nothing but the reflection of what I see. Although I am the centre of my existence, as a centre I am open and the world comes to light through me. (p.178)

Van Deurzen Smith argues that if we study the person as an object we end up distorting what it means to be human. Human life is dynamic and ecological and the whole context needs to be taken into account if it is to be understood.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes that Heidegger (1962) describes conscience very differently from Freud. She observes that:

> Psychotherapeutically based authors operate from the assumption that the highest authorities known to mankind [sic] are either the instincts (the id, the child, the libido, the true self) or society and culture as represented by parental injunctions and prescriptions (superego, ideal self, parent). Typically they picture a person's greatest challenge as that of accommodating one to the other and

> generating out of this a mature sense of self (ego, adult, self). (p. 179)

She observes that one of the consequences of our culture becoming more psychotherapeutically focussed and with institutional religion having less of an influence is that, as a culture, there has been a turning away from the religious concepts of God and "salvation" now depends on coming to terms with self and other. She notes that the significance in this shift is that it leaves the therapist in a role with significant influence, interpreting the client's shortcomings and doubts as pathology rather than as an opportunity to experience life more fully. In this scenario the therapist becomes the modern day priest who has the power to "save" the client.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes that Heidegger (1962) argues for humans to experience what it means to be alive. This requires an openness and willingness to let go of egocentricity and an artificial certainty. Our ability to be fully alive is hampered by our unwillingness to be open to all that is presented by life. Heidegger terms the "call of conscience" as the ability to remember that life is uncertain and that humans are required to be continually changing. For Heidegger then, the experience of unease is a reminder that life is never stagnant but always dynamic. Van Deurzen Smith observes that contrary to other forms of psychology or psychotherapy, existential therapy considers anxiety to be an essential reminder of humanity's "vibrant and dangerous aliveness" (p. 179).

Existentialism recognizes the human predicament that results from the difference presented by the gap between human aspirations and human limitations. The focus for existential therapy is on the current lived experience rather than on the future. At the same time existential therapy recognizes the potential for human growth and development but addresses that potential in the current lived reality rather than as simply a future possibility.

Van Deurzen-Smith observes that most religions and philosophies view the human person in dualistic manner. While different language is used, the understanding is that the human person is good or bad, or there are higher or lower natures. Of course, it is perceived to be better to be "good" or "higher" and the way to achieve this is to disown the "bad" or "lower." Van Deurzen-Smith observes that from an existential point of view, both are crucial elements of the human person and the goal should not be to disown these parts but rather to work toward integration.

Van Deurzen Smith notes that from the existential perspective it is important for clients to recognize that the experience of difficulties or challenges in their life is not evidence of being a victim but rather are opportunities for clients to recognize the potential and opportunities in their life. The goal of existential therapy is to help clients recognize the paradoxical intensity and fullness of human life as it is experienced in the current personal difficulty. As clients open up to all that life is offering them, they also recognize their own resources and can reclaim their place as central in their life.

Schneider and May (1997) build on May's belief that no theory of psychology will ever be complete without the central understanding that humans hold their future within them in an active and dynamic way. They note that while the future is unknowable clients tend to respond with familiar patterns that have been developed through past experiences. They contend that only the flexibly creative person can respond to the future in ways that are helpful. Schneider and May also believe that currently psychology is, "the study of tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe the future will be like the past" (p. 97).

They observe that what is called "normal" in psychology is really a "psychopathology of the average," so unspectacular and common that it usually goes by not noticed. The existentialist's study of the human person and human life helps to challenge these illusions.

Therefore, the role of the existential psychotherapist is to support the client to live through the current difficulties and to see the opportunities that are being presented in the present challenges. In this way, it is the goal of the existential therapist to invite the client into a fuller experience of what it means to be human.

Existential Therapy

How is existential therapy lived out in the therapy room? The existential therapeutic understanding of the therapeutic relationship is an important place to begin. Van Deurzen Smith (1997) notes that therapists who are attracted to an existential approach tend to feel "vulnerable and ontologically insecure" (p. 195) . They often will have experienced significant challenges in their own personal lives. Consequently, they come to the therapeutic relationship with few illusions regarding their superior status. While other therapeutic perspectives would perceive the therapist as the one who is the expert and the client as the one needing help, the existential perspective would understand both individuals to be equally human. As such, the therapist recognizes the responsibility of being with another individual who is exploring his or her experience of the world.

Since existential therapy is focussed on exploring the client's lived experience the emphasis is not on diagnosing any form of pathology. While existentialism is rooted in philosophy, philosophical or theoretical concepts are not implemented in the therapy room as a way to understand or explain the client's experience. The goal of existential therapy is to invite the client to "see" how they live and respond to the world. Van Deurzen-Smith notes that existential therapy believes that clients can live a worthwhile and meaningful life if they are willing to immerse themselves in life. She also argues that it is equally important that existential therapists have the same commitment in their own lives.

Since from an existential perspective, therapy is about life, there is a recognition that life is essentially mysterious and ultimately unknowable. Consequently, it is crucial that the existential therapist comes to the therapeutic relationship in a way that acknowledges this mystery. One way to do this is to foster an attitude of wonder and curiosity. From an attitude of wonder and curiosity, the clients are invited to reflect on their life in the world and to be open to new and different understandings and experiences. Since existential therapists do not believe that life is ultimately knowable, it is important for the therapist to be open to be stretched beyond previous comfortable understandings of the world. This requires the therapist to notice the ways in which his or her experience of the world could get in the way of understanding the client's experience. This is not to say that anyone can ever fully understand an other's experience but it does recognize that it is vital that therapists recognize when their experience is similar or different from the client. It also includes a commitment on the part of therapists to be continually working on their ability to be more flexible so as to be willing to be drawn into the client's world.

Van Deurzen-Smith observes that existential therapy emphasizes the role of dialogue. Dialogue provides a means for the existential therapist to enter into the client's world. Remembering that the therapist approaches the therapeutic relationship with wonder and curiosity, dialogue becomes a vehicle for facilitating clients' exploration of their life. Questions are asked then from the perspective of exploration rather than for the purpose of therapeutic interpretations. While existential therapy includes conversation, it is sensitive to the importance of silence and space in the therapeutic relationship as well.

The personal qualities that are important for the existential therapist are reminiscent of many of the qualities that were discussed in the beginning section of this chapter. Van Deurzen-Smith names them as therapist attitude, orientation, state of mind, and therapist reaction. She recognizes that the therapist is a person who brings to the therapeutic relationship all the experiences of his or her life. She notes that the experiences the therapist has not had are equally important. She observes that what is important is how the therapist has responded to these experiences, not the experiences themselves. She also recognizes that the therapist's genetic makeup, social and cultural contexts, etc. also contribute to how she or he responds in any given situation. What is important here is how these experiences have formed the therapist's attitude and how they impact the therapeutic relationship.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes the importance of the therapist continuing to be aware of her or his attitudes and how they impact the therapeutic relationship. All the clients that therapists work with provide opportunities for the therapists to discover and learn more about themselves. This ongoing recognition of the therapist's attitude, facilitates the therapist to be open to a variety of clients and life situations. Van Deurzen-Smith contends that the best learning for a therapist comes from experiencing a wide variety of life experiences. This is not to say that anyone can experience everything or that one person's experience is the same as another, but it may allow the therapist greater potential to resonate with a client's experience.

Since the role of therapists is to invite clients to explore their attitudes and recognize their patterns of behavior, it is important for therapists to be willing to expand their own self-understanding. The places in the therapeutic relationship where the therapist or client are blind to their own experiences will be places for learning and growth. These are not seen as deficits but rather, opportunities.

Van Deurxen-Smith uses the term "bias" to indicate that the therapist's state of mind will be affected on any given day because of events or circumstances in his or her own life. Since from an existential understanding the therapist is seen to be a human being in the therapeutic relationship it is expected that the therapist will be affected by passing feelings or thoughts. What is important is the therapists' willingness and commitment to remain aware of their own bias. When therapists remain aware, then their own personal experience in the therapeutic relationship offers opportunity for their own learning, and can provide important information regarding the client or the relational dynamic occurring within the relationship. Van Deurzen-Smith notes that traditionally the term counter-transference has been used to clarify the therapist's reaction in a particular client situation. From an existential view it is a helpful term if this reaction is understood as a naturally occurring phenomenon in relationships. Again, what remains essential is the therapists' ability to recognize their particular response in a given situation and to recognize that it is either reminiscent of a past event or relationship that is limiting the therapists' ability to respond to the client now. Van Deurzen-Smith also notes that this perspective recognizes that it is impossible to take a "neutral" stance toward any client.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes that orientation is the bias that the therapist brings as a result of a particular theoretical framework and set of therapeutic beliefs. As was mentioned earlier, existential therapists are drawn to existential therapy as a result of their own life experiences. While it is important within the existential framework to remain open and to explore the client's experience, the therapist's orientation will create a lens through which the therapist "sees" the client and as such will be limiting. On the one hand the therapist orientation provides a means by which to understand experience and in doing so limits it at the same time. Again, what remains important is the therapist's attentiveness to recognizing when his or her orientation is facilitating or hindering the client's therapeutic process.

Van Deurzen-Smith notes that existential therapy understands that the client will continually surprise and challenge the therapist's view and experience of the world. As part of a therapeutic relationship, the therapist's response to the client is not simply determined by the person of the therapist but also by the client. Therefore, the way in which a therapist responds to the client creates opportunities for increased self-knowledge and knowledge of the client. Certainly, the challenge in any therapeutic encounter is to distinguish between the therapist and client response. Since these are often intertwined, it can be a challenging task which underlines the importance of the therapist's ongoing commitment to self-awareness.

Van Deurzen-Smith observes that the complexity of relationship is experienced by the client as well. Consequently, one of the main functions of the therapist is to monitor the intricacies of the therapist and client experiences as well as the relational process. This a very significant part of learning to be an existential therapist. The existential therapist also supports and facilitates the client to recognize and articulate these dynamics.

From an existential therapeutic perspective, an abstract discussion of the client's problems or history is not likely to produce much change. Michael Kahn (1997) writes, "This is why existential therapy is sometimes called "being there." The idea, of course, is that therapy works when the client is really there rather than merely talking about him/herself" (p. 17). It is in this context that, from a humanistic, existential perspective, the term "presence" is most often used. The word "presence" comes from the Old French and Latin. It carries with it the connotation of bringing into the presence of another, a gift. It underlines the importance of the therapeutic relationship. Yalom (1980) concludes that:

> It is the relationship that heals - and that is the single most important lesson the psychotherapist must learn. There is no more self-evident truth in psychotherapy; every therapist observes over and over in clinical work that the encounter itself is healing for the patient in a way that transcends

> the therapist's theoretical orientation. (p. 401)

D. W. Winnicott (1965), a British psychiatrist, describes the therapeutic relationship as a "holding environment." Ashbrook (1996) refers to this while writing about the characteristics of therapeutic facilitation:

> These holding environments include . . . a structured time and peopled space; personal relatedness; an implicit and sometimes explicit, recognition of our mutual humanity; an intention to put ourselves at the service of the person coming for help; identifying and using the distracting and disruptive; and an explicit expectation that the client wonders about the kind of persons we are as well as carries assumptions about how we will work together. (p. 64)

Existential work can only be done if the therapist is willing to be touched by the client's material. While the therapist looks for the particular ways in which the client's difficulties are at least partly created from old learned patterns, the therapist also appreciates the vulnerability and unpredictability of human life. The therapist looks for life patterns in order to be able to make use of past, present, and future possibilities in order to respond to the current client situation.

Van Deurzen- Smith makes the observation that if therapists are not able to identify at least for a short time with the client's experience they will be unable to work from a place of resonance. She defines resonance as the:

> Ability to tune into the human dimension of a person's troubles and to figuratively let the vibrations of it set off a similar sound in oneself. It is more dynamic and active than sympathy and far more engaged and

> passionate than the fairly cognitive experience of empathy. I have referred to this . . . as co-pathy." (p. 196)

She notes that co-pathy requires the therapist to be with the client in a direct and available way. The therapist needs to be a steady presence while resonating closely with the client's experience.

Again, van Deurzen-Smith notes that it is important for the therapist to be present and willing to relate in a personal way and to focus on the possibilities and opportunities that are being created by the client's current life challenge. The point is not to interpret the past. This requires that the therapist respond to the unique needs of the client with flexibility rather than with a theoretical orientation that is the same for each client.

May (1995) uses the term "presence" to indicate the quality of being-with the client. He also refers to the therapist as a "midwife." He conceives of presence in terms of the "pause [which] calls forth continuous, unrealized possibilities" (p. 153). May (1981) writes:

> It is in the pause that people learn to *listen to silence.* We can hear the infinite number of sounds, we never hear at all - the unending hum and buzz of insects in a quiet summer field, a breeze blowing lightly through the golden hay, a thrush singing in the low bushes beyond the meadow. And suddenly we realize that this is *something* -- the world of "silence" is populated by a myriad of creatures and a myriad of sounds. (p. 165)

In order to be present the therapist needs to have a commitment to attend constantly to his or her own ways of destroying presence. May stresses the importance of recognizing that as therapists we inevitably destroy presence; we must be aware of when and how we do this for it effectively distances us from our clients and our preoccupations.

James F. Bugental, (1987) describes presence as a "quality of being in a situation or relationship in which one intends at a deep level to participate as fully as [one] is able" (p. 27). He suggests that such a quality facilitates attention, concern, aliveness, and exploration within the therapeutic relationship. Bugental (1999) notes Theodore Reik's (1949) metaphor of the "third ear," which is the ear that listens deeper and hears more than words (p.170). In order to hear more than words the therapist must attend to what is immediate and actual in the living moment which Bugental argues is usually that which is implicit. The "third ear" facilitates the therapist's phrasing of interventions in terms fitted to the client's needs, both in the moment and the long-term. Bugental (1999) notes that:

> What is truly in the therapeutic room, what is most directly (almost tangibly) available for the work, is the *present (i.e. living) moment,* the client's and the therapist's being in this very *now.* Their work must be centered on what *is* actually living rather than on what *was* or what *may* be. Of course, there are thoughts and feelings about the past and about the future, but - and this is the crucial point - while they are *about* the past, they are actually occurring in the present. (pp. 19-20)

Schneider and May (1995) contend that "being there" with clients and oneself cannot be overestimated as a fundamental experiential task. They name three therapeutic results:

> (1) it illuminates the construction of the client's (or therapists') experiential worlds -- highlighting both the obstacles and promises of those worlds (e.g., the client's desire and capacity for change); (2) it creates a sense of safety . . . within which delicate problems can be confronted; and (3) it deepens clients' (or therapists') capacities to

> constructively act upon their discoveries. (pp. 153-154)

They summarize presence as "an attitude of palpable -- immediate, kinesthetic, affective and profound -- *attention* and it is the ground and eventual goal of experiential work" (p. 154).

Craig (1986) writes:

> The engagement of presence requires constant discipline; discipline in remaining open to all aspects of my experience with the patient; discipline in understanding the salient features of this experience; discipline in determining just what features of this experience hold the greatest promise for opening new possibilities in the patient's existence; discipline in deciding just how these promising possibilities may be framed and offered to the patient in behaviour, language and mood; and above all, discipline in identifying and transcending all those personal needs, feelings, beliefs, and assumptions of my own which may be interfering with a fresh, virginal perception of and response to the other. (pp. 27-28)

Schneider and May observe that the discipline of presence requires a variety of abilities. Although it is possible to "learn" some of these, the experience of living life provides opportunities for learning that are hard to replicate. They note that when therapists are able to draw on this learning from life experience, it facilitates the preparation of the "therapeutic soil."

Bugental (1987) observes that there is a large degree of variation in the manner in which clients are willing to be open and truly known in the therapy room. When clients are in distress, they are likely to be fully engaged, but at other times they tend to be more distant, choosing to report on themselves rather than genuinely revealing themselves in the moment. Bugental argues that, "this failure to be present is the most explicit and widespread way that clients avoid bringing their subjectivity into their therapeutic work" (p. 23).

Bugental (1987) states that the ability to be present falls on a continuum. Some of the dimensions on this continuum are:

> From distant to immediate. From concern about how therapist will see her [sic] to focus on expressing what is going on within herself [sic]. From replays of familiar material to self-discovery for . . . herself [sic]. From detached reporting to emotional concern about her [experiences]. (p. 26)

He notes that "the client will be helped to come into his or her own subjecthood when the therapist accurately identifies what is *implicitly present but unregarded* within the client's consciousness at each moment" (p. 25). In order to notice what is "implicitly present but unregarded," the therapist needs to invite the client to shift the focus from information about the client's life to the client's actual in-the-moment experiencing. This intentional shift facilitates an expansion of the client's subjectivity and subsequent awareness. When the client's subjectivity is brought forward into consciousness there is an increase in the range of possibilities for discovering habits and attitudes which are self-limiting. This awareness also heightens the client's potential for creative options.

Bugental (1987) further describes presence as:

> The quality of being in a situation or relationship in which one intends at a deep level to participate as fully as she [sic] is able. Presence is expressed through mobilization of one's sensitivity -- both inner (to the subjective) and outer (to the situation and the other person(s) in it) -- and through bringing into action one's capacity for response. (p. 27)

Bugental further distinguishes two facets of presence: accessibility and expressiveness. At times these facets will overlap but sometimes one or the other will be more apparent, and attention then needs to be directed to the less available part.

Accessibility determines the degree to which one accepts that what happens in a situation will matter and have an effect on them. When one allows oneself to be open to the influence of an other it requires a significant investment in the relationship. .

Expressiveness has to do with the extent to which one lets oneself be truly known by others in a situation. This involves disclosing subjective experiencing, and requires a willingness to put forth some effort.

Presence and its facets, accessibility and expressiveness, all occur on a continuum and are not seen to be either/or processes. They will vary depending on the persons involved, the situation and its purpose, the material being discussed, and many other influences.

Bugental observes that the degree to which clients are genuinely *in* the interview, ready to be affected and willing to make themselves known is one of the most influential factors determining whether a genuinely therapeutic impact will result from the work. He cites May's observation:

> I now believe that one reason psychoanalysis doesn't "take," doesn't get to the basis of the problems of persons . . . in a certain number of cases, is that the intentionality of the patient is not reached. He [sic], therefore, never fully commits himself [sic], is never fully in the analysis, never has a full encounter. (p. 303)

Since the client's ability (and also the therapist's) to be present in the session is on a continuum, Bugental examines different levels of communication. He describes five levels of communication: Formal, Contact Maintenance, Standard Conversations, Critical Occasions, Intimacy.

Level one or formal occasions describes patterns which are used with those in authority, those who look only at the outer surfaces and with those whom clients seek to impress or whose favour they seek. When clients come for the first session they will use the culture's ways for dealing with the newness and seeming threat.

The key to understanding the formal relating level of presence is the recognition that accessibility and expressiveness are limited in order to minimize engagement with the other person so as to maintain a good front. It is important for the client to assess who the therapist is and how the therapist will act. The client's focus is on personal image rather than experiencing. Conversation is likely to be more impersonal and focussed on what is objective and external to the client. Communication that is focussed on image may be self conscious but it is not self disclosing. The client attends to behaving properly resulting in limited spontaneity.

At this stage the therapist seeks to find a helpful balance. In one way it is necessary to accept the client's stance in order to avoid increasing a sense of vulnerability. On the other hand, it is important to invite the client out of this relatively sterile mode. However, particularly at the beginning of the therapeutic relationship, the therapist's work may be counterproductive if the client is invited to move too quickly toward greater presence.

Bugental describes level two as contact maintenance. He observes that some clients are ready to move into the third level, "standard" relating as soon as the initial newness of the relationship has passed. For other clients it is important to have an intermediate step. While these clients appear ready to talk about their concerns when the therapist begins to invite conversation in these areas, it becomes readily apparent that these clients are not ready to enter into the discussion. These clients may find a transitional step helpful. This is where the contact maintenance level can be helpful.

In this level of communication, the focus is on the gathering of necessary factual information (age, address, telephone numbers, availability of insurance coverage, etc.) while the therapist watches for signs of emotional reactions indicating a readiness to move to a deeper level. When those are not forthcoming, the therapist does not push for deeper involvements until the client is ready. The therapist needs to recognize where it may be helpful to invite the client to give some familiar information (e.g. typical day, how they came to their present job, educational history, current significant relationship, etc.). As the client begins to talk about these topics, conversation may begin at a superficial level but is likely to become more involved. The therapist who is sensitive will recognize when this shift is occurring and how the therapist might support and encourage further conversation. It becomes even more important for the therapist to attend carefully when the client is invited to talk about areas of life, which are likely to be therapeutically important.

Sometimes, when the client has been doing some highly emotional work and needs some time before leaving the session, the transition may be in the opposite direction. In this case, the therapist moves to this contact maintenance level as a way of helping the client prepare to face the outer world.

Level three is the stage of standard conversations. Bugental uses the term "standard" to suggest the "usual" or "expected." He observes that this level of communication is the most widely employed in everyday talking. Standard conversations provide a place where the client can find a balance between concern for image and involvement in expressing inner experiencing. They typically include genuine but limited personal involvement.

Therapists use this kind of communication to invite clients to share information regarding their educational and vocational history, identities and relationships with family members and previous therapeutic experience, to name a few. As in the previous level, the therapist is aware of any deeper feeling or inner conflicts that the client might be experiencing while sharing this information. When the client's feelings emerge and the therapist responds to them there is a greater likelihood that the conversation will move to the fourth level.

Level four describes critical occasions. Bugental defines "critical" as making a difference and critical occasions are those times and conversations that can make a difference. He notes that "the word 'crisis' denotes a turning point, a stage in a sequence of events in which future outcomes will be influenced for good or ill or in some other significant way" (p. 38). Bugental observes that it is at this stage where genuine changes in the thoughts, feelings, or actions will occur.

It is typical that in the fourth level, client's emotions are more available in the moment rather than only recalled. In a similar way, clients describe past and present inner experience more directly.

In the critical occasion level, clients are more focussed on expressing their inner experiencing than with the preservation of their image. The conversation is more varied in emotional tone, tempo and form. The client's language also changes as inner experiencing becomes more available and more immediately alive. The client begins to use more adjectives and adverbs in an effort to convey the textures and colours of the experience. In general, the person working at the fourth level is caught up in the expressive side of presence. Accessibility may be somewhat reduced, as attention is focussed on the inner flow.

These conversations are pivotal places where one or both participants are likely to emerge with some difference in perspective, attitude, or emotion. In general, psychotherapy assumes that greater awareness results from such explorations and in turn that greater awareness yields increased understanding and improved ability to make choices.

Intimacy is the characteristic of level five. Bugental suggests that "when two people relate on an intimate level, there is maximum accessibility and/or expressiveness between them" (p. 43). In the therapeutic setting this means that the client is caught up in the expression of inner experiencing and is no longer concerned with maintaining an image. At this stage the client is very open to what the therapist may say or do. In a similar way, the therapist is completely engaged with what the client is experiencing. Bugental notes that it is in these experiences that instances of what may be considered extrasensory perception or telepathy may occur.

Bugental recognizes that one of the distinguishing features of this level is the mutuality of intimacy. However, this mutuality does not mean equal. In this stage the client is open and expressive of feelings, thoughts, and inner processes. The therapist is less open with his or her own experience but rather is open to being affected by the client's experience. Therapists can choose to be open with how the client is impacting them when it is perceived to be useful for the client.

These experiences of intimacy provide opportunities for the client to confront lifelong patterns, with the hope for re-organization of the client's way of being alive, and the vision of more authentic being. In these experiences of intimacy, the subjective being of the client is centrally involved in inner acknowledgments which lead to lasting consequences.

Bugental (1987) does not intend that the experience of intimacy in itself be seen as the change agent. The client may have experienced and received a greater vision for what life can be like but intimacy is only a change agent if the client pursues efforts to affect change following that experience of intimacy. It is in this moment of intimacy that a door opens and the client becomes aware of so much inner knowledge that had been suppressed. In that enlarged inner vision is the healing/growth dynamic.

Intimacy is a sharing of deep and immediate experiencing. It is not expressed in the content of what is said but in the depth of the client's inner awareness and the readiness to make that awareness open to the therapist. It is also experienced in the therapist's deep oneness and resonance with the client's immediate inner living as it is expressed in this way.

Intimacy is not a lasting condition of relating. Moments of intimacy will come and sometimes will last most of the therapeutic hour but they will inevitably end. Hopefully as the work proceeds there will be other experiences of intimacy until the client is able to incorporate this newly acquired inner knowing into life outside the therapy room.

Bugental observes that therapists sometimes are so attentive to the content of what the client is telling them and to their prior conceptions about client dynamics and needs that they do not notice the distance that exists between themselves and their clients. Bugental speculates this oversight has two roots:

> It is a part of the legacy we have inherited from nineteenth century scientism which Freud and many others passed along. The notion of the impersonal, objective, and scientific doctor treating his or her 'patient'

> who needed do nothing but *be* patient and provide needed information was the ideal of that time, and incredibly it still exists in many quarters. The other source resides in the endemic objectification of ourselves and our clients . . . . In this view the conditions (neurosis, problems, symptoms) that bring our clients to us are seen as some kind of lack of information which it is our job to correct by doing a skilled job of detection. We must find the historic roots of these issues, must trace how they are bringing about the present misery, and then disclose all this to our clients, who should then be cured. (p. 47)

Bugental notes that while it does not work that way, many therapists still focus on the content, the history and other information from and about the client. They seek to find where each client fits into their theories. When the therapist has gathered all the necessary information, they begin to teach the client and understand any client objection as "resistance" which has to be mastered. However, in this situation there is no place for the therapist to determine whether or not the client is engaged with the work.

Bugental also observes that therapists have assumed that "rapport with the patient" is the same as presence. He argues that they are not the same. Rapport has to do with the relationship between therapist and client but it has nothing to do with the client's experience of inner subjectivity. In a similar manner, Bugental notes that "client motivation" has been addressed by many writers and teachers, yet a motivated client is not necessarily a truly present client.

Bugental (1987) notes that for all disciplines that desire to be regarded as sciences, objectivity was unquestioned. He suggests that it is time for a new paradigm, one that recognizes the centrality of subjectivity. He defines subjectivity as "all that goes on individually, privately, and only partially consciously within each of us" (p. 47). He describes this new paradigm as maintaining that:

> Human beings are the locus of any knowledge; knowledge is not an "out-there" *thing*, but an "in-here" experience, out-there is always an inference, a selection from the much more that is potential, and thus what we say of the out-there is always a partial statement; therefore to learn about the out-there, we must learn about the in-here; and whatever we learn about the out-there must be qualified by the in-here instrumentality of its discovery. (p. 47)

Bugental (1999) observes that this paradigm does not invalidate "out-there" science or knowledge in any way but simply acknowledges that such knowledge is incomplete. He suggests that if we develop better "in-here" knowledge it will then be possible to discover how that fits with the "out-there."

While the focus has been on the client it should be apparent that, to be sufficiently sensitive to the client's efforts to reach the critical occasions level of presence, the therapist must bring personal subjectivity into the work. Thus, the therapist's own presence is continually needed in order to develop an effective therapeutic alliance.

The client and therapist are not always functioning at the same level of communication, but Bugental notes that it is desirable that they be as close as possible. Clients generally have reported a desire to have a therapist who is authentically accessible and appropriately expressive. To be genuinely present is not simple. It becomes particularly difficult if therapists operate from a pre-set plan for the work or with the fixed idea that they know all that needs to be known about a client. In these situations boredom can become a real problem. When that is the case, presence is one of the first things lost in the experience of non-engagement.

Bugental describes the primary instrument brought to the support of the client's therapeutic efforts as the therapist's "trained, practiced and disciplined sensitivity" (p. 222). This sensitivity is like a musical instrument which must be carefully prepared, maintained, tuned, and protected. The experienced therapist can detect nuances of feelings and meanings and can draw conclusions which fit with the client's nonverbal experiencing.

This sensitivity is not solely a matter of education or supervision, although both may contribute in important ways to its development. Since it is a product of life experience, Bugental observes that it is more difficult for a younger person to develop it. He notes that while it is more difficult, it is not impossible, as some very intuitive and empathic younger colleagues demonstrate. Generally, these are people who have had varied and often difficult life experiences. However, age is not in itself a guarantee that such sensitivity has been developed. Certainly with age can come a rigidity which is the opposite of sensitivity. The kind of sensitivity described here is a result of varied and meaningful human contacts, of exposure to the aesthetic dimensions of life, and of firsthand encounter with the existential conditions of one's own being.

Bugental (1987) insists that a view of the therapist as artist is crucial to the therapeutic work. He notes that the understanding of theory is important but to the experienced therapist, the theory falls to the background. He likens it to the painter who does not think "blue and yellow make green" but has such understanding of colour within. He argues that for most art forms the following attributes are present:

- self as primary instrument;

- open-endedness;
- disciplined sensitivity;
- highly developed skills;
- a product of some kind;
- self-determined standards;
- identification with the work. (p. 265)

The artist is recognized as the primary instrument for the expression of the art form. That is why each artist is expected to be distinctive even though artists may be roughly grouped by discipline. That is why we see Bach as different from Mozart and Bateman different from Chagall. While each artist received instruction or coaching in the development of the art form, the artistry is in the person and not in the vehicle of expression.

Bugental (1997) describes the art of psychotherapy as an incremental one. He notes that the artist-psychotherapist goes through ongoing cycles:

- experiencing the phenomena of therapy at one level,
- becoming familiar and comfortable with that level,
- beginning to recognize previously unappreciated differences and similarities in the phenomena of therapy,
- consciously incorporating these new recognitions into experiencing the phenomena of therapy and so coming to a new level,
- becoming familiar and comfortable with the new level and allowing the new recognitions to be incorporated into the preconscious so that they no longer require focal attention,

- beginning to recognize new and previously unappreciated differences and similarities in the phenomena of therapy,
- and so on and on. (p. 266)

Bugental observes that there is no end point or complete mastery; the mastery of the art of therapy is a continually evolving process rather than an end point. This invites the therapist to accept and even welcome the ongoing challenge to be open to what is now being presented in the therapeutic process.

If the artist is the ultimate artistic instrument, then the core of the therapeutic instrument is the sensitivity of the therapist. Bugental notes that musicians who have "perfect pitch" may not become artists but if they do they will have a great advantage. Likewise, the psychotherapist who has an innate sensitivity can refine his or her capacity to sense slight changes in the client, to understand what the client is ready to hear or address, and to pick up on faint emotions.

The artist recognizes that art is always mystery. As therapists we can deny the mystery and believe that there is an answer for every life problem and that rational control is the goal. However, when the therapist pretends to know a client's needs, the client may say or do something that is surprising. As existential therapists, part of the task is to support clients to acknowledge the mystery that is within and around them, but also they must remind themselves of this as well.

This brings the existential therapist back to the root of psychology as "the study of the soul." Therapy that is nurturing of the soul recognizes the mystery of life and recognizes that the only reality we have is that of this living moment.

As the young pastor in the scenario in chapter one, I was there to be of help to the family and provide comfort and support at a tragic time in their lives. My initial response was to focus on the content of the discussion as a means of moderating the intensity of feeling that was being experienced by all of us. At the time I believed this was the right thing to do for the family not recognizing that I was taking care of my own uncomfortableness as well. In the midst of the crisis there was a lot to attend to: the details of what had happened; the various individuals involved; other people who were coming to the house and the speculative process regarding what might or might not have happened to Linda.

At the time, I believed I was being helpful by focussing on the content, changing the topic when strong feelings emerged, and offering answers to their many questions. Now as I think about that experience, I believe that I was somewhat helpful but that the help was limited because I was not present. I was struggling with my own experience of the abduction. Since I was unable to respond to my own experience, I did not have the ability to be with the family in a way that created a relational container for them to be present. To enter into the present lived experience called for engaging an emotional intensity that was unfamiliar and frightening. As a result I remained with the more comfortable level of content. However, as the process of engaging the content became less helpful, I became more open to trying something different: I invited the family to talk about their present lived experience.

From this early experience with the family, I have gone on to learn more about the experience of presence and also the ways in which I disrupt presence. Over time I have come to recognize that the answer is not to be found "out there somewhere" but rather in the lived experience of the moment

This chapter has presented an overview of the theories regarding the therapeutic relationship, factors contributing to change, and the role of theory in the therapeutic process. While there is diversity of opinion on these issues, there does seem to be agreement regarding the importance of the therapeutic relationship and the necessary personal qualities of the therapist. The research recognizes the client as the primary change agent and recommends a collaborative working relationship between therapist and client. The research also indicates a strong desire on the part of the therapeutic community to rely on theory to support the belief that the professional theories, therapist's techniques and efforts are responsible for the change. Consequently, a tension remains within the psychotherapeutic community. This tension is fueled by insurance companies which focus on outcomes and require treatment plans that represent a standard approach to clients who present with similar symptoms and do not reflect the individual client needs.

Existentialism offers a different perspective on an individual's experience. Rather than seeing the problems in life that clients experience as a sign of pathology, existentialism regards these as natural occurrences of living. The aim of existential therapy is to support clients to be open to what it means to be alive. This includes understanding their own attitudes and recognizing the ways in which they have characteristically responded. This opens the possibility of responding differently. Existential therapy recognizes that the future is unknown and requires humans to be flexibly creative.

From an existential therapeutic perspective, an abstract discussion of the client's problems or history is not likely to produce much change. Consequently, it is important that the therapist's focus is on the present living moment. While there are thoughts and feelings about the past and future, in actual fact they are occurring in the present. This requires the therapist to bring a disciplined sensitivity to the encounter, inviting clients to notice their experience in the present moment. The therapist who is present allows the clients' experience to evoke resonances by using empathy in a disciplined fashion. These resonances combined with therapist intuition provide attunement to the therapeutic relationship, the clients' flow of awareness and the needs of the overall development of the work.

While an understanding of theory is important, it falls into the background when working with a specific client. The therapist is more of an artist and the person of the therapist is the ultimate artistic instrument. As such, there is no complete mastery or end point. However, there is a recognition that art is always a mystery. This mystery emerges in the co-creation of the therapeutic relationship.

In the previous chapters I have addressed human learning, the human sense of identity and the experience of presence. In the next chapter having invited research participants to reflect on their personal experience of presence, I have identified eight aspects for interpretation.

Chapter Six: Hermeneutical Nodes

Ted Aoki (1966) describes the curricular landscape as "rhizomean," a word he uses not only to signify the multiplicity of curricula but also to "recognize that textured web of connecting lines that like rhizomean plants, shoot from here to there, and everywhere working through, nourished by humus" (p. 6). After reminding us of Gilles Delenze's (1987) observation that "multiplicity is not a noun," Aoki continues, "In multiplicity what counts are not the elements, but what there is between, the between, as site of relations which are not separable from each other. Each multiplicity *grows in the middle*" (p. 6).

It is from this rhizomean perspective that I have identified eight nodes of hermeneutic inquiry. These nodes which for the purpose of the project need to be discussed separately, are intimately linked to each other, and in many ways defy such separate discussion.

These "nodes" of inquiry emerged from a variety of sources: a focus group with five pastoral counsellors (including myself), two interviews with my youngest daughter and her math tutor, email "conversations" with an individual who was noted in a book that I was reading during this dissertation process, past conversations with students that I had noted, and written evaluations by former students.

These nodes will provide opportunity for hermeneutic reflection in order to discover and articulate the experience of presence. This reflection provides the opportunity to discover that which previously was not known. As such, hermeneutic inquiry offers a means to interpret the experience of presence.

In this chapter I move between the therapeutic and pedagogical relationship fluidly, often not distinguishing between them. While I recognize that there are differences between these relationships, for the purpose of this chapter I am reflecting on both of these relationships as contexts for learning and for the experience of "presence."

In his book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Ablom (1997) writes about his weekly visits with a former professor who is terminally ill and describes presence as exemplified by Morrie:

> When Morrie was with you, he was really with you. He looked you straight in the eye and he listened as if you were the only person in the world . . . . "I believe in being fully present," Morrie said. "That means you should be *with* the person you're with. When I'm talking to you now, Mitch, I try to keep focussed only on what is going on between us. I am not thinking of what's coming up this Friday. I am not thinking about doing another Koppel show, or about what medications I'm taking. I'm talking to you. I am thinking about you." (pp. 135-136)

The Elusiveness of Presence

While presence is a personal or relational experience which the research participants could understand, there is also an elusiveness that resists description. This became apparent in the early conversations with the focus group participants who began by describing "its absence."

> Mary: When I think about presence I think about it in terms of something specific, not just the absence of something, but the absence of something specific: the absence of compassion, the absence of interest, the absence of concern.

Laura: So you come with the intention of being present and if the client doesn't meet you there in the present place or time . . . then somehow you become not present. I get distracted by my own thoughts or other activities outside the room, outside of the relationship with the person.

Becky: When I allow my anxiety to bubble up inside me and am not aware of it. That's when I am not present.

Sarah: I notice I'm not there.

Mary: I get bored.

Carol: I would remember the conversations I would have with friends. I would be so busy planning what I was going to say next that I wouldn't be listening to the conversation.

George: The absence of feeling, I think. I know I'm not connecting.

Participants described the importance of being aware of their bodily experiences in knowing when they were present and when they were absent.

Marnie: A beginning place for me was recognizing years ago that I was connected to my body through my breath and when I really could breathe it would slow me down and I would be very present.

Mary: I tighten up.

Laura: I notice when I am in or out of my body . . . . It's a real connection to a physical experience.

Sarah: I'm aware of the feelings in my body when I'm with a client in terms of what's going on.

Becky: I get very tired for one thing.

Medical doctor Joan Borysenko (1991) describes her experience of presence as one that was intimately related to the physical. She tells about an experience with a young male patient with terminal cancer who had attempted suicide and failed. She believed that since he was successful in other areas of his life, if he had truly wanted to kill himself he would have been successful. She writes:

> I told him this, and we had one of those holy moments when two souls meet through the eyes in an instant of truth and recognition. You can feel a peculiar shift during these experiences, a sense in the body. There is often a prickling sensation at the back of the neck and a sharpening of perception. Clock time is left behind and eternal time takes over. Colours become more vibrant and the moment seems realer than real . . . . There is no posturing or artifice. In this state, information can be accessed from the larger whole, and a revelatory quality takes over. (pp. 73-73)

The participants observed the importance of the physical cues this way:

Laura: It's not the words.

Sarah: We're attending to a variety of things as a client is speaking to us. One is the words. Another is their body language, their voice, and so I respond back in a way that acknowledges all of that or interprets to a certain degree what I'm experiencing with them. Then they know that they're being attended to or heard and then that allows them to potentially stay with that larger sense of themselves too.

Mary: If I am really hearing what's going on under their words, I have a response that lets them know that I'm there, and then I can feel this letting go inside.

Becky: It's something visual to me. There isn't the vacancy. The eyes have an aliveness. Otherwise, they're kind of dull and vacant. So, it probably says something about our eyes too.

Laura: You can tell in normal conversation with people you know - like the lights are on but nobody's home. And then when somebody gets there, they get into their eyes and obviously their eyes are their core but there is an energetic difference in the eyes in terms of them being there.

The participants acknowledged an intention to be present with the client. They also recognized that sometimes either the connection is not made or the connection can be interfered with or become disconnected. One participant, Carol described her experience of presence and the therapeutic encounter this way:

> It is informed by my compassionate curiosity. This in turn informs the questions I pose to the clients. I invite the client to clarify meanings in their lives, deepen their self-understanding, unearth personal awarenesses, wonder about the influences of wounding in their lives, and reveal how they interpret and engage life.

Other participants described it differently:

Mary: I would name presence as my being present to myself and therefore I can be present here. I remember a client situation in which I was watching another student's video presentation of a client with whom they had worked for a long time. There was a pivotal session in which the client's posture changed dramatically. I'm thinking now, that was the moment of connection. Of a deeper connection. A very significant connection. He's now present.

Laura: I don't connect because I am missing the compassion or the interest in my own story out of that. I'm not connecting to myself; I'm not connecting to them. There is nothing to engage with.

Becky: When I'm not present to myself then I can't be present with the client. Because I am not taking myself seriously. If I don't take myself seriously how am I taking this client seriously?

Marnie: It happened in different things that I was doing and one of them was the practice of yoga which calls persons to be present to their own body and their own breath and connecting there. Another one was in the practising of dance which was again attending to my body, but also being present to my thoughts that were happening at that time and to where they were going. Were they thinking of the past, were they going ahead to the future? And being present to the other dancers as well.

The participants wondered how the number of sessions affected the experience of presence. Some participants reflected that they felt they were able to be present with the client in the first session; others felt that it took time and was easier although not guaranteed in later sessions:

Jennifer: We want to be present to the story and that is exactly what needs to happen in session one

Laura: If that person is present to themselves then that connection happens right away. It's about readiness for this process.

Carol: When we talk about presence after twelve sessions, it has a different quality than this meeting place that you're describing now. Part of the skill is about being here and about being able to say this is what's happening between us.

Marnie: There is something about time and the development of the relationship or knowledge of each other that allows me to trust my experience.

I related to the focus group an image of a railroad bridge, an image I often use in introductory teaching sessions for counsellors. I am referring to the type of bridge that spans a gorge and is supported by many cross trestles. The client and therapist are on opposite sides of the gorge. Only the client's request (or Intake form) for counselling connects the two in the initial session. As the initial and subsequent sessions progress there is the potential for putting more trestles in place. These trestles strengthen the therapeutic relationship thus developing a context in which the clients are able to discuss the problems that bring them to counselling. In a sense the therapeutic relationship is able to bear more weight as the trestles are put into place.

The trestles represent a number of dynamic factors within the relationship and are constructed by both individuals separately and together. In the beginning, clients want to share the details of whatever is troubling them; as the counsellor is able to attend to the telling, trestles are being placed under that therapeutic relationship. This results only when clients feel heard; they develop trust in themselves and in the therapeutic relationship to "hold" whatever they need to address. As mentioned earlier, it is based on a variety of things: words both spoken and unspoken, the body, tone of voice, eye contact, the internal physical and emotional response of the counsellor, the counsellor's hunches, etc.

Of course, with each client the trestles will differ slightly. Some client's fear rejection, abandonment, or judgement to mention a few. Attending to those factors which are prominent for the client, alone or in combination, will provide the "trestles" necessary to address the issues that have resulted in a need for counselling. Of course, if a client is coming for short-term, more solution-based counselling, this would require fewer trestles. On the other hand, if a client is addressing more traumatic experiences, then the therapeutic relationship will need to be stronger to support this kind of work.

These trestles are constructed by "present" reflection on what is occurring within the therapeutic relationship in the telling of the client's story. This reflection is facilitated by attending to the current lived experience of each individual and the relationship.

In this section, the participants described the experience of presence as both elusive and tangible. While presence is elusive, the participants recognized that the experience is readily identifiable both in themselves and the other. They described the experience as "an encounter," "being there," "a holy moment." They noted the differences they experienced both physically and emotionally in themselves and also the differences they observed in the clients when present. They recognized important physical cues such as breath, energy in the eyes, and the importance of feelings that would indicate to them when the client was not present.

The participants observed that distractions with self, distractions outside the relationship, or distractions in the environment can interfere with the experience of presence. The participant's own physical and emotional self-awareness provided clues in determining whether or not the client was present. Participants' ability to be present to themselves facilitated the connection with the client and this was considered of particular importance.

In some instances, the participants felt that time or the number of sessions created opportunities for presence to be experienced. However, increased number of sessions did not guarantee that a connection would be made with a client. With some clients who were open to the experience of self, a connection could be made very readily early in the relationship.

Research participants spoke of their own individual experiences of presence and also described a dynamic interplay between themselves and the client which either supported or hindered the experience of presence in the relationship. The next section addresses the experience of presence in the pedagogical relationship.

It's More Than You and Me

Van Manen (1991) describes the three fundamental conditions for a pedagogical relationship as "love and care, hope and trust, and responsibility" (p. 65). He describes the pedagogical love of the teacher for the child as foundational for the development of the learning relationship. He compares the teacher's love of the child to that of the parent who loves a child in all its growing and developing. He writes:

> A parent, like a teacher, loves a child as a person who is essentially in the process of becoming . . . Of course, this does not mean that we do not value the children for what they are now. The meaning a child has for me as a parent or teacher, lies in the present. Obviously, I do not know who or what this child will become, I cannot tell the future. Yet what is so fascinating about children is that we

> constantly see them coming into their own, as it were. I notice signs of a new maturity: a personal way of talking, a new pleasant confidence or a disarming shyness, a surprising critical judgement, a hard-won ability, an unsuspected talent, a certain way of walking, gesturing or moving the body -- it is in many little things that we see a child learn and grow up. (p. 67)

While van Manen writes about the pedagogical relationship with students who are children, his view of needing to love the child (or adult learner) is not an uncommon belief. I would be more inclined to align myself with Roger's (1969) understanding of the pedagogical relationship as one that is characterized by realness or genuineness, non-possessive caring, prizing, trust, respect and empathic understanding. These all are shown by, among other things, sensitive and accurate listening. To "love the child"(or adult learner) makes the relationship more personal than is necessarily helpful for either the student or the teacher. One of my tasks as a parent has been to support my children in making choices for themselves. This has been particularly challenging when at times their choices have differed from my preconceived notions of what I felt was "best" for them. If I "love" a student, I believe it makes it more difficult to avoid imposing on the student what I believe to be best; rather I should be facilitative and supportive of self-discovery. As a teacher, I think my investment is to be in the process of learning and not in the outcome.

One of the participants reflected on this concept of a teacher's "love." He was reminded of a movie called *The Tango Lesson*:

> Tutor: It's about a woman who is the person making the film and is learning to dance the tango from this tango instructor. At one point, a love affair unfolds. The tango instructor accuses her of not loving

> him and her response is "I do love you, I love you through my work." If you asked Erika [student] if she thought I loved her as a person she would give you a strange look but if you asked her if I loved the work she would say I did.

This indicates a shift in focus to the common project between the teacher and the student, removing it from the realm of the personal, while at the same time recognizing the personal.

Max van Manen (1991) writes from the perspective of being interested:

> To be interested in something is to stand in the midst (inter esses) of something, to take part in, to maintain a caring relation to something . . . . By being intensely present to something I experience the subject matter of my interest in a focussed way. I experience my personal orientedness in a more defined way, as well. As I focus on a subject of interest, my focus allows me to concentrate and to be attentive. Thus, in being intensely with something or somebody I gain an awareness of possibilities, the indefinability, the openness of the subject. A subject that interests me is a subject that matters to me. (p. 196)

There is a sense in which the idea of interest indicates that one has an investment in something. Van Manen questions what it means "to have a hold on something if it does not have a hold on us?" (p. 197) Interest determines our relationship to our context. When a particular matter is of interest to us, we find ourselves attracted to it. He notes that the active term of interest is "wonder" (p. 198).

The participants spoke about "interest" from the perspective of "being heard":

Carol: When I am with persons with a pre-set agenda I can feel my words just bouncing off them because they're already closed. Having a

> sense that there's an openness to being heard . . . . Feeling heard is a feeling so I know that I'm in the presence of somebody who is truly present because of how I feel.

This indicates the importance of the involvement of both individuals in the relationship. The participants were interested in the balance between focussing on the individuals in the relationship and focussing on the relationship itself.

> Tom: I think it is important to let go of an ego investment in the conversation. So it's not about me making a point. It's not about my ego. It's about me in the relationship and being able to respond and allowing it to go wherever it needs to go.
>
> Sarah: If I can be there without ego, since ego means having an agenda for this person. So my being there is about being there without an agenda for them. This releases me from that responsibility. This leaves me to be present.
>
> Tom: When I keep hold of an agenda, I really am with myself. I have kept myself the primary interest. When I am engaged with the client then I'm not sure that I'm primary anymore. On the other hand, I think that clients come in and are terribly present to themselves. I think there is a radical self-possession that's going on there and part of the work is to invite the client to be open to experiencing themselves in relationship with me.

Van Manen's invitation to be "interested" is also a reminder to notice where our attention is focussed.

I would agree with van Manen that the pedagogical relationship is "fascinated with the growth of the other." As a teacher I delight in the signs of growth and maturity that students exhibit: their excitement as they experience personal learning and growth; their increased reflective ability; their surprise and wonder in unexpected insights; and their increasing confidence in themselves, their clients and the therapeutic process. However, this "interest" in the growth of the student does not exclude the growth of the teacher. If it is truly a pedagogical "relationship" then both individuals will be changed in some way and what occurs between them will be greater than each.

Tom:	You're not just thinking of yourself, you're lost into it.
Mary:	You can be open to any change in the conversation and not be threatened by the experience.
Becky:	The experience would be of the relationship generating energy.
Tutor:	Teaching is a coupling moment. This dynamic emergent - "two heads are better than two" kind of structure.
James:	If I am going to offer my self in relationship to them, then that also leaves me open to be changed by the experience. To be a vulnerable presence willing to take on and be affected by the moment, carrying the wounds and death around us.

Van Manen describes the pedagogical relationship as a life experience that has significance in and of itself. He recognizes that this may be because what we "received" from a great teacher is less about a particular subject area than the way in which the material was presented or embodied in the person of this teacher.

It has been said, "Technique is what you use until the therapist arrives." Good methods can help a therapist find a way into the client's dilemma but good therapy does not begin until the real-life therapist joins with the real-life client. In a parallel way, technique is what teachers use until the real teacher arrives.

Parker Palmer (1998) writes that "*good teaching cannot be reduced to technique. Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher*" (p. 10). Palmer observes that what is important in teaching, is the teacher's ability to connect with the students and to connect the students with the subject. This depends much more on teachers' self-knowledge and capacity to trust themselves and their willingness to be available and vulnerable in the process of teaching, than on the specific teaching techniques that are used.

P. Palmer (1998) observes that good teachers seem to share one trait: a strong sense of identity fuses their work. " 'Dr. A. is really there when she teaches' or 'Mr. B. has such enthusiasm for the subject.' " (p. 10) He observes that at times it is not easy to describe what makes a good teacher but it is easer to describe a bad teacher. P. Palmer notes one student's description as, "their words float somewhere in front of their faces, like balloon speech in cartoons" (p. 10). That image captures it. "Bad" teachers keep themselves separate from the subjects they are teaching and as a result separate themselves from their students. "Good" teachers are able to bring self, subject, and student together and weave them "into the fabric of life" (p. 11).

I experienced this as I studied for my undergraduate degree with a professor who taught Biblical Hebrew. The teaching of an ancient language had the potential to be very dry and boring. However, this particular professor was fascinated with all the nuances of the language, how it had developed and how it was related to earlier languages. In a certain sense the professor was what he taught. The fascination and enthusiasm that he embodied made his course one of my favorites.

In summary, "good" teaching or counselling requires that the teacher or counsellor be willing to develop a dynamic three-way relationship that includes themselves, the content of the discussion, and the students or clients. The focus is not primarily on the teacher or counsellor, student or client, or the subject matter being discussed. It is in the dynamic interplay of all three. In teaching counselling students, I have shared my observation that the most risky choice we make as counsellors is to let ourselves be affected by those we work with. This requires the teacher or counsellor to relinquish a radical self-possession and to be open to the dynamic interplay of self, other, and the focus of the learning. It is much more than me or you. The invitation is to be a vulnerable presence which leads us to the next node.

The Vulnerable Ego

In the pedagogical relationship with a student, a teacher is actively and immediately involved in a situation that is only later available for reflection. It is an interactive process that is always concerned with the unique and particular circumstances of the pedagogical situation. Van Manen (1991) describes living the pedagogical moment as a "total personal response or thoughtful action in a particular situation" (p. 109).

Van Manen contends that "the pedagogical moment requires not so much reflection *in* action as reflection *on* action" (p. 115). He notes that when this reflection occurs it is always recalling the event since it has already passed. It is possible to participate in this kind of reflective practice alone or with others. The point of this kind of reflective practice is to help any future choices that are made become "mindful and tactful" (p. 117). Van Manen writes:

> Tactful action is thoughtful in that the educator shows appropriate sensitivity to what is good and what is required in a situation. But tactful action is also "thoughtless" in that one cannot step back and reflect while one acts. Tactful action is an "instant thinking acting" that cannot be fully reflective -- in other words, it is not really the outcome of a problem-solving process or a decision-making activity. (p. 118)

Martin Buber (1937) describes this way of responding in the moment as being on a "narrow ridge." He uses this image as a way of recognizing that, although there are no absolutes or sureness of expressible knowledge, it is important to be willing to meet that which is yet undisclosed

Van Manen contends that tactful action is "always immediate, situational, contingent and improvisational" (p. 123). Tactful action is always informed by the intention and commitment of the individuals involved in the relationship. The *New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines tact as, "the delicate perception of the right thing; to say or do without offending . . . . implies the skill in dealing with persons or difficult situations of one who has a quick and delicate sense of what is fitting and thus avoids giving offence" (p. 1448). Tact implies more than a simple desire or ability to get along with others. Rather it implies interpersonal abilities that are especially important for the pedagogical (or therapeutic) relationship.

Van Manen observes that tact includes a complex collection of qualitites, abilities, and competencies. He notes a number of qualities of the tactful person:

> First, a tactful person has the sensitive ability to interpret inner thoughts, understandings, feelings, and desires from indirect clues such as gestures, demeanour, expression and body language . . . . Secondly, tact consists in the

> ability to interpret the psychological and social significance of the features of this inner life . . . . Third, a person with tact appears to have a fine sense of standards, limits, and balance that makes it possible to know almost automatically how far to enter into a situation and what distance to keep in individual circumstances. Finally, tact seems characterized by moral intuitiveness. A person with tact is able to sense the right thing to do. (pp. 125-126)

I would also add that an important element of tact is self-awareness, someone who is conscious of his or her own thoughts, feelings, desires, needs, etc. This allows the person to be open to the other and respond in a way that facilitates the other's learning and growth, recognizing this as the primary purpose of the relationship.

Van Manen notes that tact is derived etymologically from the Latin "tactus" which means touch. The word intact, which comes from the same root indicates something not touched, unimpaired, uninjured, kept or left whole. The word tactful implies that one is "fully in touch and being able to have an effect" (p. 126). He observes that the word contact contains the same meaning as tact but in an expanded and strengthened form. He notes that "it refers to a close human relationship, intimacy and connectedness" (p. 127).

Van Manen recognizes the contribution of Herman Helmholtz, an eighteenth-century educator who suggested that "tact is not simply a feeling or unconscious inclination, but rather that tact is a certain 'mode of knowing and being' that encompasses the important human science notion of *Bildung* (forming or education)" (p. 131). Van Manen observes that tact is not simply a skill that can be learned or a feeling but rather can be nurtured through the process of human growth, development, and education.

Friedrich Schleiermacher uses the concept of "tone" to describe "that special quality in human interaction that allows a person to behave with sensitivity and flexibility towards others" (as cited in van Manen, 1991, p. 131). Van Manen refers to the German understanding of the German *Taktgefuhl* which indicates the individual's feeling for tactfulness. He writes:

> To be tactful with another person one must be able to "hear," "feel," "respect," the essence or uniqueness of the person . . . . There is a hint here that the quality of tact is somewhat like talent . . . . Talent must be recognized, developed, nurtured, and disciplined. Similarly, pedagogical tact, although a gift in some sense, needs to be prepared and practised as a special "feel" for acting tactfully. (p. 133)

This is of special interest to those involved in the educational preparation of teachers, counsellors, etc. I believe that it is possible to facilitate an individual's growth in pedagogical or therapeutic tact but it has been my experience that students differ in their ability to grow and develop this ability. This raises the question of whether or not pedagogical tact is essentially a gift or talent that can be nurtured and honed. If a student is lacking this gift or talent it leads me to wonder whether there is the potential for such a student to develop a sense of tact.

The participants reflected similar experiences to van Manen's understanding of "tact" and "tone." They spoke of the need to respond to the "buoyancy" of the relationship, the need to improvise or the need to respond as a partner in a dance:

Tutor: You're drawn into the buoyancy of the relationship and there is a way in which you lose yourself to the play of the relationship, to the dialogue.

Marnie: In the conversation I don't know what my next question will be. It just arrives from the conversation and sometimes I'm really surprised what the next question will be and I'm really surprised at the answer. There are times when I have an idea about what the answer could be and it's something completely different. I think it takes us both to the places we haven't explored before. And that feels different than when I've taken the client someplace and I knew where they were going . . . . Something has already transpired that allows the question to draw us both into the session.

Becky: It's like a dance - a partnership of both the client and the therapist. And in the dance you can move back and forth and in and out. You can move any direction but you're always there. You remain open to your partner without judgement.

Tutor: It's a conversational dance that absolutely can't be scripted and after the fact can't even be scripted because you just sort of go well what was that, but it works, really works . . . . I suspect the best moments that jump out in my mind are just kind of pushing a piece of the algebra tiles over into a corner so she notices - look what happens if that fits there and suddenly having her able to factor. So, it's just this business of being there and really there isn't very good vocabulary around for this for teaching. It's not a cause-effect logic It's just participation in this conversational dance for lack of a better term.

Tutor: I'd certainly describe my positioning with Erika in terms of listening - far more listening than telling. In any given interaction she speaks several more times than I do.

In order to exercise tact, it is important to be able to overcome the natural orientation to see oneself as the centre of all things. While the primacy of the experience of "I" in my world is neither good nor bad it is not the whole of human experience. It is not possible to really experience the subjectivity of the other until I am able to overcome the centeredness of my self in the world. Van Manen observes that the possibility "of experience of the otherness of the other, resides in my experience of the vulnerability of the other" (p. 141). While I would agree with van Manen, my experience has been that it is also dependent on the experience of my own vulnerability. If I am unable to recognize my own vulnerability, then the recognition of the vulnerability of the other would be from a place of superiority rather than from a "being with." The participants reflected on it this way:

Jennifer: It's co-existing parts of a whole. It would be a matter of knowing what's going on with me. Some of that I would use right now in the work with a client, some of it I would be making choices to not respond to. This may not be the right time or it may be irrelevant or it may be my stuff or what's going on in the relationship.

Marnie: I need to be able to sieve what's going on between the client and me and be able to be conscious enough to think it into language, to articulate it.

Tom: Letting go of ego. The ego investment in the conversation. So it's not about me making the point, or me structuring the conversation with the client. It's not about me, It's not about my ego. It's about me in the relationship and about me able to respond and to allow it to go wherever it needs to go. If it's about me than I am with myself actually. I've kept myself primary interest. And when I'm engaged I'm not sure that I'm primary anymore.

Carol: When I miss the client it is when I have an agenda.

Van Manen's discussion of tact recognizes the importance of the teacher's sensitive acknowledgement of the other. While in the pedagogical or therapeutic moment it is not possible (most of the time) to step back and take the time to reflect on what is happening, the participants acknowledged the importance of therapists being immediately aware of their own experience and place in the relationship. The awareness of the therapist or teacher includes the whole of past experience: thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, intuitions, observations of the other and the relationship. In this awareness is the recognition of the vulnerability of the therapist or teacher who "gives over" to the movement of the relationship. It is in the experience of the movement of the relationship that neither teacher nor student hold primary position but they are involved in a dynamic interplay with each other. How does one learn to be in the therapeutic or pedagogical relationship in this manner? This question is the focus of the next node.

It's About the Learning

How did I learn to be present with my clients or perhaps, more accurately, how am I continuing to learn to be present with my clients and students? My experience of learning to be present is not about "arriving" at a particular place but rather about gaining a greater ability and awareness of what it means to be present, which includes a recognition of absence as well. In chapter one I described my experience as a young parish pastor in which I felt inadequate to respond to a family who had experienced the tragic loss of their daughter. That was the first significant point in my professional life in which I sensed that there was something "more." It seemed intangible and out of reach at the time but this lack has been the impetus for pondering the question of presence for many years.

Like the experience of the parish, my early sessions with clients were based on my thinking that I needed to "do something." Clients were coming to see me because of some distress and I thought they were looking to me to give them the answer or to "fix it." At the time this fit my personal desire to be helpful and my need to feel important and in control. At the same time I was filled with doubts and anxieties. "Will the client like me?" "What if they don't come back?" "Am I a good counsellor?" "What if I don't know what to do?" These were some of the questions that plagued me.

There were a number of elements that contributed to my learning to be present. These included my willingness to explore my own experience, supervisors who supported and facilitated this exploration, conversations with colleagues who were engaged in their own learning, work with clients that provided opportunities for ongoing exploration and learning, and a variety of readings in the area. In the early stages of my learning the relationship with my supervisors was a fundamental and significant context for learning.

David Smith (2001) in his discussion of Self and Other proposes that there is a place where Self and Other cannot be identified separately because the moment one is identified then the other is also highlighted. He proposes that to try to separate them is not only useless but actually causes harm because they are "always everywhere coemergent, with a denial of one being a denial of the other" (p. 272).

Smith refers to a third century Indian philosopher Nagarjuna who "declared that in the life of true liberty, 'there is neither yes nor no, nor not-yes or not-no' " (p. 272). Smith observes that in this statement Nagarjuna exposes the futility of dualistic thinking and draws attention to the "pre-existent unity by which all dualisms are already held together" (p. 272). Dualistic thinking draws attention to differences: different language, different customs, different countries, different beliefs. Alternatively, Smith notes, living with a deep awareness of the unity underlying all difference is:

> A form of life-practice that is "to be realized and not sought," as Chih Tung, disciple of Hui Neng, founder of the Ch'an (Zen) school in the seventh century has put it. One cannot seek it, because that would put it "over there" and somewhere, while it is already "here," inherent in every present moment. (p. 272)

Smith observes that the truth of "living awake" as a way that sustains us requires a different way of living, a way that is not dependent on language, rationality, or culture. What is required is a simple openness to "that which meets us at every turn, in every thing, every thought, feeling, idea, person" (p. 272). This also is reminiscent of the enactivist model of learning discussed in chapter four that describes learning as an unpredictable process that emerges in ways that cannot be foreseen (Davis and Sumara, 1997).

Smith (2001) notes that being in the presence of individuals who are truly awake can be very unsettling especially for those who have not "faced" themselves. They seem like a mirror in which one sees oneself. He writes:

> There is an uncanny stillness present, reminding us of our constant agitation, our frenetic searching for that which we cannot name . . . . The stillness of one who is awake does not arise out of passivity, quietism, or simple resignation but rather from deep attunement to the coherence and integrity of everything that is already and everywhere at work in the world as it is . . . . In the presence of one who has faced themselves, one feels understood, found, unconditionally accepted, but this

> acceptance does not necessarily induce pleasure. It does not mean an endorsement or condoning of bad things, things that hurt others, for example. Rather in facing one who has faced themselves one has the feeling of being seen, deeply. (p. 273)

Smith observes that in the experience of being deeply seen, the individual begins to gain an awareness of her or his own actions, particularly as such actions are lodged in a desire of the Self over against the Other. The individual who sees personal actions in this way is filled with the desire to live differently, with greater awareness.

James described the relationship with his supervisor this way:

> My CPE[2] supervisor at the University of Chicago was aggressive for breakfast. I had spent 6 years in the ghetto, worked with Black Panthers, drug addicts, etc. and he still scared the crap out of me. Mainly because he could know me better than I knew myself. He crashed open the door of my fear and Missouri Synod[3] rigidity and one day had the whole damn class pour grace into me so that I cried for days. I was lucky enough to enter into seminary having experienced both love and grace. The son of a bitch dropped dead the next quarter at age 38 or 39. Pissed a-lot of us off. I really loved him. Mentors are hard to find.

While I would not describe most of my supervisors as aggressive, James' experience of feeling transparent was similar to my early experiences in supervision. When I went into supervisory sessions, I felt naked or exposed as if my supervisors could "see" everything I was thinking or feeling. This caused me great anxiety. I felt it was only a matter of time before they found out that I really was incompetent. I experienced their "stillness" as being simultaneously terrifying and inviting -- terrifying because their stillness was like a mirror where I was called to face myself; inviting because they opened a space where I felt "understood, found, and unconditionally accepted."

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[2] CPE or Clinical Pastoral Education is a clinical educational experience in which persons in ministry can participate to develop greater relational skills for their professional practice. CPE usually is offered in hospitals, prisons, extended care settings and other institutions.

[3] Missouri Synod is a branch of Lutheranism that tends to interpret Scripture and Lutheran tradition from a more fundamental perspective.

They would invite me to talk about what was happening for me in the supervisory relationship. What did I know about myself? What was I feeling? How did these feelings change in response to the client? Could I use what I was experiencing with the client in the therapeutic process? Could I stay in the moment and work with what was happening right now? At the beginning, the answer to these questions was mostly: "Not really." I preferred to analyse the past or brainstorm about the future. At the beginning, I was unsure how to stay in the present either in supervision or "in the room" with the client.

While my initial orientation with clients had been either to analyse the past or brainstorm about the future, I was also experiencing the limitations of this approach. I considered myself to have good analytic and problem solving abilities. However, I began to feel like a trap shooter who was throwing up clay targets for the client to shoot out of the air. No matter how many or how brilliant the solutions I conceived, there was always a reason why they would not work for the client. Alternatively, if by chance they did agree that it was a good solution, rarely would the client follow through with enacting it. I was frustrated. I felt that, if I was unsuccessful in making something happen, then I was unsuccessful as a therapist. While I knew that the client was responsible for some of this as well, I also expected that if the client was not "grabbing hold" and working to change things, than I simply had not found the "right" way to motivate or convince the client. I was stuck!

In the “stillness” of the supervisory relationship, I began to slowly face myself. To be present to both myself and the supervisor was to feel what was happening in the moment. This included an intensity with which I was unfamiliar. I found it frightening. I often felt that it would be much easier to be anywhere but in the moment. Yet, I knew that this was not completely true. I felt limited in my work with clients. In the supportive environment of the supervisory relationship I began to attend to my own experience: bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts, and hunches. In sessions with clients I slowly began to invite the client to attend to his or her own experiences as well. I began to learn to pay attention to my own experience and at the same time to be open both to the experience of the client and to what was happening between us. It was terrifying and exciting.

As I began to explore my experience and to be open to hear about the client’s experience, I discovered that, out of my own vulnerability as a beginning counsellor, I had placed myself at the centre of the therapeutic relationship. While the session was supposed to be for the client’s benefit, I had made it all about me. I had listened attentively to the content of the client’s conversation but only to the extent that I believed I could find the answer or the solution. I remained in the centre. When I began to feel my own vulnerability and to recognize that I was not in control of the session, I was able to step back and make room for the client. This really was the client’s session, the client’s life. It was not my job to fix it or change it. My role was to be with clients as they discovered more about themselves. The therapeutic relationship was the context where they could feel “understood, found, and unconditionally accepted.” As I write this, it seems so easy. Yet it was a very challenging learning process for me, unfolding slowly over a number of years while I was seeing clients under supervision. Intuitively, I knew I needed to take that "leap" to let go and to be open to what was happening within myself, the client, and the counselling process.

The participants reflected on their learning process:

Marnie:	As I reflect on my own learning as a pastoral counselling student, I experienced, I can do this. I can connect. What I also experienced was the client connecting as well. In my getting it, they were getting it.
George:	One important aspect of the learning has been to watch somebody else whom you experience to be present.
Carol:	I think for me it's watching our illustrious leader's abilities and your modelling of it. That has been a big learning for me.
Becky:	Learning doesn't happen in isolation. It happens partly by modelling. In the realness of the relationship with the supervisor, therapist, or client there is that experience of being.

However, it is not only the student who can experience vulnerability. This is also true for the teacher. "All real living is meeting," said Martin Buber (1937) and teaching is endless meeting. To choose to stay open to all these meetings is a challenging task.

P. Palmer (1998) observes that one way for teachers to minimize their experience of vulnerability is to separate from the students, subject, and then ourselves. He notes that when teachers become separate then it is "as if" they are the teacher. He suggests that, when teachers' words become separated from themselves, they become the " 'balloon speech in cartoons' and we become caricatures of ourselves" (p. 17).

P. Palmer observes that this "self-protective" split of the person from practice is supported and encouraged by an academic culture that mistrusts truth that is personal. He contends that though the academic world “claims to value multiple ways of knowing, it tends to honour one - an ‘objective way’ of knowing that takes us into the ‘real’ world by taking us out of ‘ourselves’ ” (p. 18). When teachers distance themselves from students, subject and self in order to cope with their own vulnerability, they forget that in isolating themselves, life becomes more precarious. To not be present is a dangerous choice.

However, if the individual is able to remain aware of her or his own vulnerability and that of the student, then there are various possibilities for response. Van Manen contends that the tactful person meets another “with a touch, with a word, with a gesture, with an action, with the eyes, with silence” (p. 143). Van Manen (1991) notes that etymologically tact suggests physical touch but it also includes an ambiguous sense of an influence or effect that one person has on another that is not physical. He observes that tact is not intrusive or aggressive and often involves a holding back. He observes that tact “has a corporeal quality: thoughtfulness incarnates itself in tactful action” (p. 143).

Van Manen contends that it is not possible to plan a tactful action or response. It is realized in unexpected or unpredictable situations. While it is not possible to plan for such situations, it is possible to prepare for them. Aoki (1991) likens this to the musical practice of improvisation. When musicians improvise together they respond not only to each other but also to whatever calls them in that experience. Since there are never two moments in time that are exactly alike, there can never be an exact repetition. (p. 29) It is the unstable, variable moments that particularly require a tactful response in teaching. These are not accidents but rather an essential and integral part of teaching.

Pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact are the skills that enable a teacher to respond in an improvisational manner in educational situations that are continually changing. These situations are continually changing because the students are never the same; the teacher is never the same; and the atmosphere is never the same. The teacher is continually challenged to recognize the pedagogical possibilities as they are presented in ordinary events and to utilize these for significant learning instances. This is what tact can offer teaching.

As said earlier, the teacher is unable to anticipate these situations and therefore, needs to recognize them, respond quickly in words and/or actions that can reorient the learning experience in a pedagogically responsive and responsible manner. A good teacher recognizes that the student's experience of what is being taught determines whether or not the lesson is successful. Therefore, van Manen contends that tact facilitates the recognition of what is significant in the pedagogical moment. This ability to discern the significant element is a reminder again of the importance of a vulnerable ego, ones willingness to relinquish the centrality of the relationship and instead be open not only to one's own experience but to the experience of the other and of the relationship.

The participants spoke of the improvisational nature of their practice:

Carol: We improvise. We're learning all the structure and it's when we become present to ourselves and integrate the structure in the work that the presence is about improvising.

Marnie: That's what techniques give me - a kind of confidence then to trust what resources I have . . . and my capacity to be present.

Carol: When you're with a client you move with them, you don't move according to the rules of whatever.

I reflected that in the beginning sometimes students need to use my exact words because they do not have language. They do not yet have the technique. They do not have the classical training. Once they have those words then they can begin to be creative with words of their own and to develop a more improvisational style of counselling.

Becky: I heard an interview about a jazz pianist who went the classical route but then was able to flow with what's inside. So, there was a point at which the jazz pianist had to be able to move with his own rhythm and not stay in the classical structure. He needed to find his own way to be present and that was through improvisation. That's where he began to come into his presence.

Van Manen notes that tact is "the expression of thoughtfulness" (p. 146). The whole being of the individual is involved as it requires an active sensitivity toward the lived experience of the other and a recognition of what is unique for this person. He concludes:

> To exercise tact means to *see* a situation calling for sensitivity, to *understand* the meaning of what is seen, to *sense* the *significance* of this situation, to *know how and what to do*, and to actually *do* something right. To act tactfully may imply all these and yet tactful action is instantaneous. (p. 146)

Bugental (1987, 1999) calls this the "art of therapy" which I believe can be extended to the "art of teaching."

From the preceding discussion some important components involved in the process of learning to be present have emerged. One is the importance of a mentor. The participants noted how helpful it was to observe and experience someone they saw as being present. They were then able to integrate that experience into their own lives. This facilitated their learning of presence and they began to better understand how to embody this learning in their relationship with the clients. This hearkens back to P. Palmer's

(1998) emphasis on the integrity of the teacher. It is not only what we teach but who we are as teachers that is significant in the student's learning process.

Important learning about presence emerged for me out of lived experience in which I felt my limitations. These limitations created the "occasions" for learning (Davis and Sumara, 1997). At times I recognized the "occasions" but particularly in the beginning stages of the learning, it was my supervisor who most often became aware of the opportunities as they were presenting themselves. These were the unstable moments that invited learning. As part of the learning, I later became more able to identify the "occasions" for myself and to recognize the interconnections between self, other, context, and the therapeutic relationship.

One area of significant learning for me was to pay attention to the congruence or dissonance between what the client or student was saying and my lived experience in the moment. For example, if clients were describing an experience in which feelings of sadness would be expected and they were smiling or laughing as they talked about it, I would recognize this lack of congruence as an "occasion" for learning. I would invite clients to notice what they were experiencing as they spoke. Sometimes they would recognize the dissonance between their affect and the content of the conversation but at other times they were not able to recognize it. As we both noticed what was happening, opportunities for further discussion and engagement became possible. Initially, not knowing how the client would respond, noting such lack of congruence felt like a "leap" into the unknown. I was moving the focus of the conversation from the details of the content to the experiential. Sometimes the client would be puzzled or unable to respond but even that created openings for further exploration. Over time I have come to trust my own experience and to recognize the opportunities for learning as they present themselves. I am able to invite clients to work with these "opportunities" as they become ready or open to do so.

In the last section, I noted that it is important for the individual to recognize the vulnerability of the ego. In the beginning stages, the student becomes aware of the tension between structure and vulnerability. One way to respond to the experience of vulnerability is to cling more stringently to structure. This structure may get lived out in a variety of ways: using a theoretical orientation that is highly diagnostic and prescriptive, using particular techniques, or remaining distant and aloof in the relationship, to name a few. However, when the teacher or pastoral counsellor clings to a structure or method, what is forgotten is that the particular context with the unique individual will disclose the appropriate manner to proceed.

When the students recognize their vulnerability as a resource for their own learning and their work with clients, then they are able to enter into the improvisational nature of the therapy. All the learning they have received from books and other external sources remains important but there is a way in which it all falls to the background or is "forgotten" and the immediate awareness of the present experience is the focus of the therapist's attention. This present experience then becomes the changing context within which supervisor and student or student and client continue to learn.

How do the context and the experience of space and time relate to presence? The next node will explore these as they are integrated into the learning process.

The Learning Occasion

Van Manen observes that a teacher needs to believe in the student. In particular the teacher needs to believe that individual students have the potential for learning. The teacher's belief strengthens the student as long as the student experiences this belief as positive and genuine. He notes that tact:

> Discerns what is unique and different about a child and attempts to enhance this uniqueness. In contrast, a tactless teacher fails to see differences among children. A tactless teacher treats all children the same way in the mistaken belief that such an approach serves the principle of equal justice and consistency. (p. 169)

I would agree with van Manen's observation that the teacher needs to believe in the student's potential to learn. In my own experience as a developing counsellor, it was as if my supervisors held open a space in which I could discover and learn. They could see something in me that I was not aware of and their naming of it created a space that I could then move into and claim in a way that fit for me. Laura spoke of it this way:

> Sometimes I think about it as a space that somehow we open and then the other person enters but they can't open it on their own. Somehow my belief, my confidence or my trust opens the space that they then can enter and claim for themselves.

Erika's tutor described it this way:

> There are lots of ways to express your confidence or lack of confidence in a learner. As soon as a student knows what you expect they almost always live up to it. I had a very good vice-principal in my first few years of teaching who mentored me around ways of interpreting the level of confidence I was expressing in a student in my classroom. He was responsible for teacher evaluations so he was in my classroom monthly. He did a fabulous job helping me to expect different things from the student by actions not through the actual explicit expressions but through how I respond or what I choose to underline or how big the check mark

is. What is the student reading to understand my expectations of them which I think can be interpreted in terms of presence. What presence is the student reading? What sense does the student have that I am present in their learning.

My daughter, Erika describes the relationship with the tutor as "it's just two people learning math." I found her description of "two people learning math" to be very interesting in that the relationship was that of tutor and student. However, Erika did not perceive it to be a hierarchical relationship even though she was aware that the tutor was a teacher. In fact, she talked about how she felt differently in relation to her classmates "I feel inferior because I think I should be as smart. 'Cause she's my age so it's possible for me to be as smart."

At the time of the research Erika had worked with the tutor for an hour and a half most Saturday mornings for a year. Initially, I was looking for someone to help Erika increase her math skills. At the beginning of grade nine it became very apparent that Erika was having trouble and would be in significant difficulty if something did not change. Erika had a history of difficulty in school but by the middle of grade eight she seemed to be improving. Over the years we had provided other academic support for Erika with limited success. It seemed important to try to find her some support again. However, I was guarded in my hope for any success.

Erika has changed in ways that were unexpected at the beginning of her work with the tutor. It has been like witnessing a beautiful flower open. At first, Erika continued on with her way of being in the world: forgetful, distracted easily from the task at hand, putting minimal effort into her work, not caring about the quality of her work, and being resistant and defensive about receiving any kind of help. When we first went to meet the tutor, Erika was resigned to the fact that she needed help and was willing to go see him rather than to spend more time with her classroom teacher. At least going to see the tutor would not be visible to her classmates. This was important for Erika. However, from then on, Erika has been willing to get up on a Saturday morning and meet with the tutor. Certainly the quality and consistency of her work continues to be an ongoing issue but she has made significant changes in her attitudes and beliefs about herself. This is beginning to be lived out in some changed, more positive behaviors.

The task for Erika and the tutor was to increase Erika's math skills. So much more has happened through this process. Yet, it seems that all the two of them do together is math. They know little about each other and in the time they spend together there is limited "social" conversation. Therefore, the change has not resulted from Erika responding to some kind of "charismatic personality." Their time is almost exclusively focussed on math. Davis et al. (2000) describe teaching as an occasion to "bring something about, but not always deliberately" (p. 103). While the task has been to increase Erika's math skills, something more far-reaching has occurred. Erika recognizes this when she says "He's not just helping me with math." Davis and Suamara (1997) summarize this in another way "By occasioning action, the teacher participates in, but does not determine student learning" (p. 110).

Stechler (2000) describes the therapeutic relationship as one of "dual space." He writes:

> The challenge for us is to create a dual space inside of therapy. In one space we are neutral, observant, allowing a lot of room for the patient to look inward, and the freedom to be with himself [sic], but because of the reciprocity inherent in the second space, not by himself [sic]. (p. 82)

If this "dual space" is translated into the teacher-student relationship, then the teacher is creating the relational "container" within which the student can explore the learning challenge. Within this relationship, the student can be curious, can struggle, explore, stumble, and discover what there is to be learned. The teacher observes the student interacting with the material, responds to the learning needs and provides the space and support to explore further. It is within this "dual space" that students learn about both the material being studied and themselves.

Erika describes her work with the tutor as "just two people learning math" and goes on to say "when you're around someone who helps you be a better you, you like them." Erika is describing how the experience of being successful at math has changed her. Davis et al. (2000) state that "the self is the product of communal relations and is thus always being produced. The self is fluid and contextual" (p. 170). Before working with the tutor Erika would have described herself as "stupid, lazy, and not good at anything." She very seldom felt successful. She was like a child looking through a store window at all the wonderful things other children could have but these things were unavailable to her. Award ceremonies and similar competency-based celebrations at school assemblies simply emphasized for Erika this "truth." At times this caused her to despair and worry about her future yet she felt helpless to change it.

Kerby (1991) writes "The meaning of the past is not something fixed and final but something continually prefigured and updated in the present" (p. 7). Erika describes this for herself when she says:

> When you are not successful, you feel little and you feel you won't amount to anything. When you are successful, you feel bigger, like there's something out there for you. That God has put you on this earth to do something. When you're

> successful, you feel like you can find something you have a passion about. When someone helps you find your way around in life you feel close to them. It's easier to do things now. Things don't feel so hard. I don't feel sorry for myself. I feel better about myself. Things don't seem so hazy. When I'm not successful I'm not clear about what I am doing.

The change in Erika's self-perception is interesting in light of her work with the tutor. It is not as if working with the tutor magically transformed her into a child who could now understand and perform mathematical calculations flawlessly. In fact, working with the tutor has uncovered many "holes" in Erika's understanding of math. A significant amount of the early work was spent on learning or relearning math from her previous grades and this is occasionally still necessary. There were times when Erika would bring pages of homework to the tutor that were completely wrong. Yet she does not describe these experiences as failure or unsuccessful. In fact she says "Even if I've learned one little thing each time that's fine with him. You don't have to learn it all the first time."

The tutor describes the process this way:

> I pull something out, pose a question or two, and just see what happens. Based on what happens sometimes it deflects into something entirely different or she might completely miss the point so I try to figure out how we need to backtrack and figure out why that point might have been missed . . . . Wrong is never a big thing. It's a conversation. Now that I think about it the wrong moments are almost always the sites of something interesting. That's just wrong. Let's figure out why that's wrong. One of us is thinking very differently from the other one of us about something in order for that statement to have any coherence at all.

Van Manen (1991) observes that tact is mediated through speech that either prevents or contributes to a sense of being connected. The tactful voice makes contact through speech. He notes that silence is another powerful way in which tact is mediated. Silence can function in a variety of ways. Silence can communicate an experience of being together where words would disrupt. Silence can also create an open and expectant space for students to enter when ready. There is also the silence of the listening ear in which there is complete attentiveness to hear what the student feels is important to communicate.

Van Manen contends that tact is also mediated through the eyes. Teacher and student both communicate with each other through their facial expressions and eyes. We experience the presence of an other through the eyes of the other. Eye to eye contact is crucial for this form of communication. Earlier in this chapter one of the participants reflected on the importance of the eyes and how the energy in the eyes changes when they become present.

Humans are also present to each other through their bodies. Van Manen notes that "word is gesture, and gesture is word" (p.182). Through gestural language a shared reality is shaped. Teachers create an atmosphere not only by what they say or do but also in the way in which they are physically present to their students.

My own learning crystallized for me in an educational event. In 1994, I participated in a week long professional development workshop. This workshop offered opportunities to listen to theoretical presentations, and to participate in a small group process in which each participant would take turns working in front of the group with a peer group member who would be the "client" for the week.

The day I was to work with my "client" in front of the group I was feeling highly anxious and very vulnerable. I got up early and climbed up the mountain nearby. There I played my violin as the sun came up. As I played, I felt something settle inside myself. I felt solid, grounded in who I was. Suddenly, I knew that I would be okay that morning, no matter what happened when I worked with the client. I came down the mountain with a new sense of sureness within myself.

As I stood to work in front of the group, I felt some nervousness but more a sense of aliveness. I began to explore with the client the work she wanted to do. As the session progressed, I felt myself move with ease and comfort, attending to my own experience and at a the same time open to the client and the therapeutic relationship. This was a pivotal learning experience for me. In the past, I had been able to work in such a manner when I was alone with a client in my office but when my work was being observed by my peers and/or my supervisor I had felt frozen and immobile. In this instance I learned that if I let go of the need to control what happens, nothing catastrophic happens. In fact, something quite the opposite occurred. The client experienced the session to be very helpful and I experienced much of what Borysenko (1999) described as " . . . a sharpening of perception, clock time is left behind and eternal time takes over . . . colors become more vibrant and the moment seems realer than real" (p. 74).

Ted Aoki (1991) describes the pedagogical relationship as a "living in tensionality." This tensionality emerges from "in-dwelling" in a space between two curricula worlds: "the worlds of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived" (p. 8). As a developing counsellor, I was aware of the plan or structure of a therapeutic session and various ways of questioning and intervening in a client's situation. Initially, I responded to the client's situation in an instrumental manner, focussed on "doing." I was ignoring the most important resource I could offer: that of my self and my ability to offer clients a place where they could "face themselves" in a safe, unconditionally accepting context which would allow them to recognize the many resources they could access for themselves. In the scenario described above, I was able to hold open the space for the client and consequently, the client and I each had a different experience than what I had previously known. Aoki (1991) reminds us "that there is a forgetfulness that teaching [or counselling] is fundamentally a mode of being" (p. 7).

The participants echoed this:

Mary: If I can let go of that need for control and face the fact that I'm fearful and admit that to myself then I can be okay with the space that is created.

James: I'm reminded of the word hospice which means making room . . . making room within. Presence is also making room for the other, not just being alongside. It is hospitality, thus hospice.

This led to further conversations regarding space:

George: The purpose of presence for me is that it allows me to connect to myself and then to other people. When I think about this elusive presence it's as if somehow I have a sphere. Imagine a sphere around me that allows me to connect with people. It's as if the sphere then grows larger. Then I can connect with more people and I can connect with other parts of people in a way that I hadn't been able to before.

Carol: I have felt it like an expansion. Like an energy field where all of a sudden there's a magnetic attraction and so the attraction draws in -

it goes both ways - the energy is exchanged both ways. The client is energized by what's happening and the therapist is too. The energy field expands.

Mary: It's like the physical space contracts but the relational space expands.

The participants reflected on the experience of time:

George: One of my struggles with the idea of presence has been around the idea of time and I think there's an inherent assumption that if we're present to somebody that we're in the present. But I'm not so sure about that. I think of past, present, and future and I think of times when I go into the future as my sense of presence grows. At least that's what it seems like to me.

Tom: The way they engage is that they just tell the story of the past. Then it's just a story from the past, but maybe our task then is to help them connect the past with the present and to always invite the client to reflect on what that is like for them. So if we are building a bridge between the past and the present with them then maybe that is presence.

Mary: When we work with clients they can be very much in the past, but they can be in the past and outside of the room and not be present with you. Or they can be in the past and be in the room with you and be very present. Rather than focussing on it as a story of something that happened in the past, what has stayed with you all these years so that it's important for you to tell me this now. And the presence would be in the connection they are making now with me.

George: Instead of standing on the bridge with them watching the water flow under the bridge, what we do is walk down with them to the water and walk into the water with them and then have them describe what it's like now for them. We're merging past with present . . . . Often there is a lot of power in the story that can pull you into a client's life. But if you're both just standing on the bridge and looking at a vista where the water has gone, that doesn't allow you to have much power to do anything different. Somehow it has to be brought into a more live context.

These descriptions by the participants reminded me of earlier statements from chapter one. Augustine in his *Confessions* observes that the present is "a present of things past and a present of things to come." James (1890/1983) states that "the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched and from which we can look in two directions into time" (p. 574). This is a reminder that as human beings we live in a "living present" (Husserl, 1970) where the past and future are important particularly as they impact the individual in the present. This underlines the importance of the teacher or therapist leaving the bridge and walking down to the water with the student or client (George).

The participants described the experience of working with clients as one that filled them with awe and wonder. They described how this transcended time and space. They became very aware of the mystery of the encounter which again is a reminder that the experience of presence is "more than you and me."

This section addressed the learning occasion and what contributed to the learning of presence. The teacher's belief in the ability of the student to learn and the teacher's ability to create a space for learning are important elements. However, it is also the teacher's openness to acknowledge the uniqueness of each student which is crucial to the recognition of these learning occasions. As students enter into these learning occasions, they have the opportunity of experiencing time and space differently.

What challenges do the students experience in these learning occasions? The next section will address the challenges of learning.

Problems About Learning

The process of learning to be a pastoral counsellor is a complex one that requires of the student a willingness to learn and grow both personally and professionally. My experience in supervision with adult learners is that most adults have difficulty letting themselves learn. They encounter many fears and anxieties which are reminiscent of earlier learning experiences or relationships with persons in authority. Eckstein and Wallerstein (1958) coined the term "problems about learning" (p. 139). They recognized that students found it difficult to enter into a joint process of looking at their work. Learning problems particularly emerge when students begin to work with clients. What seemed so straight forward in the book they have read becomes much more complex as they begin to work with clients. The participants reflected it this way:

> Carol: I think you have to experience where you bump into your own limitations and go "Ugh" and then have to address those. I don't think there is any other way to learn it other than the hard way of the mistakes or limitations.

Mary: A crucial point in my learning experience was the recognition that it wasn't happening and I don't think you get that if you're sitting in a lecture and having somebody talk to you about it or read about it in a book.

Becky: It's not possible to learn it cognitively from a book. If we don't do the process of connecting with ourselves and if not called to do that by the supervisor, then it's not going to happen. Anybody can learn to play the piano by rote. Anybody could learn where middle C is and the fingering and play the piano but not everybody becomes a pianist.

Students come to supervision with spoken and unspoken concerns. Many times the unspoken concerns are powerful influences on the learning process. As these unspoken issues become more conscious and at times spoken, then the student has the opportunity to respond differently to them. These worries can appear at any time in the learning and supervision process. Some students at the early stages of learning can be overcome with anxiety and fear that they might "say the wrong thing" or harm the client in some way. This can be so intense that they are almost paralysed in their work. They respond to their vulnerability with familiar ways of coping. It is common for a student to hide or minimize feelings of fear and anxiety out of a concern that the supervisor might perceive them as incompetent.

At other times these concerns emerge as a student is developing competence. For example, recently a student came in for supervision overwhelmed with the belief that she was stupid. She hesitantly and tearfully asked me if she had the worst grades in the class. I was completely taken off guard by her question and by the intensity of her feelings.

From my perspective, she was one of the most gifted students I supervised. I invited her to tell me more about what it was like to feel stupid. I listened to her and asked if there was anything particular in this situation that was intensifying the experience of feeling stupid. She responded that the more she worked with clients the more she felt that she was going to find out that she could not be a good therapist and I would find that out as well.

I have observed with adult learners that one of the "problems about learning" is in letting themselves learn. They come to the learning context with the expectation that they should already know. Therefore, part of creating a learning context involves inviting students to be open to letting themselves learn. This includes a recognition that learning is simply that, learning, and does not need to carry with it judgements about right or wrong, good or bad. This is often a significant piece of learning for adult learners. The perception that learning is about right or wrong usually has come from earlier learning experiences in which they have felt negatively affected by being wrong.

Erika's tutor described a process where wrong is perceived differently. The focus is shifted from what Erika has done wrong to what the tutor has done. He states:

> When she gets it wrong my response is not that she got it wrong. It's okay - I got it wrong. What will I try this time? With Erika I can actually blurt out, "that's just plain wrong," and away we go. Just plain wrong is a useful statement because we can toss out what you're thinking right now and try something else. It's sort of this confidence that that was wrong, let's figure out what was right. Wrong isn't this ultimately emotionally drenched notion between us. Wrong is just this stuff at the moment. Your move.

This is an interesting perspective on right and wrong. It leads the student to focus on learning rather than on getting caught up in the fact that something was wrong. If the understanding of right and wrong is shifted, then what happens to the experience of competence? Where is competence lodged? Certainly as a supervisor I have an evaluative role with a student. While I can engage in conversation with students regarding their work with clients, competence ultimately needs to be lodged within the student. It is dangerous for the student to look to the client to affirm personal competence and it is equally dangerous for the supervisor to measure his or her competence on the feedback or success of the student. Competence needs to be lodged internally, with an openness to engage the experience of the other.

The participants spoke of it this way:

Marnie: It was important for me to learn in a context that respected my integrity. My willingness to discover my own sense of integrity as a therapist. The experiential process of learning was a very important contributing factor.

Mary: I'm thinking about those tentative first plunks, the first steps in my first basic unit. How crucial that period of time was in terms of activating whether or not I've got it in me. I think there is a place for technique. In my experience some techniques were very empowering for me. "Oh, I can do this." And it was enough to get me engaged. The positive aspect of techniques is that they can put me in touch with my own inner resources. They're a bit of structure for taking my first steps.

Reinsmith (1992) points to teaching as a way of being in the world. He writes, "more concretely, teaching is a way of being present to students which establishes, should they be receptive, a specific engagement" (p. 12). Trungpa (1973) states it slightly differently, suggesting that if the students open their minds then the teacher is able to open up as well. This allows the teacher to be as Reinsmith observes, a "witness or abiding presence." This presence allows for both teacher and student to learn in a dynamic and dialogical manner.

Adult learners bring to the learning situation previous learning experiences whose impacts may have been helpful in some ways and in other ways not. The challenge for both the student and teacher is to recognize "problems about learning" and to incorporate them into the present learning. Often the challenges of learning are rooted in past experiences that see learning as either right or wrong. An important shift is to see it all as part of the learning and in fact a vital part of the learning. It is when students bump into their limitations that they discover an area that needs development. It is in this specific engagement that learning occurs. This allows the student to incorporate the learning into her or his identity and integrity as a pastoral counsellor.

Disconnected Connections

We live in a culture that encourages disconnected connectedness. I watch my teenage children wander around with their "ears plugged in" to an external source of sound. Everywhere I go there is some kind of sound, in elevators, public washrooms, malls, etc. This provides an illusion of connectedness. Individuals are also described as "air heads," "space cadets," or as one in whom "the lights are on but no one is home." In these descriptions, there is a recognition that a conversation is occurring without any real engagement. On the other hand, there are numerous books and articles addressing the issue of disconnectedness with ourselves, significant people in our lives, the natural world, etc. There are workshops on "organizing the clutter," stress management, and living a balanced life. In many ways our increasing reliance on various forms of technology supports this disconnection. Our focus is drawn outside of ourselves and this is where we seek stimulation and solutions.

Clients often come to counselling seeking and expecting solutions from the counsellor. Counsellors desiring to be helpful often fall into the trap of expecting themselves to provide these solutions. For the most part, these counsellor-offered solutions do not reap any lasting change as the advice is simply one more thing that is offered from the external environment to which the client has difficulty relating.

Beginning counsellors in particular have a tendency to be overly focussed on the details of what the client reports to them. They are afraid they might miss or forget some important detail that will make all the difference in the client work. The questions they ask are designed to elicit more details about the client situation. This is not to minimize the importance of hearing the client's experience but rather it is the over-emphasizing of the client's story that becomes problematic. It is often the case that in the telling of the story to a compassionate listener the client feels heard but if that is all that the counsellor has to offer, then lasting change is often difficult to achieve. A supervisor I worked with once asked the question "Why do people come for counselling?" He answered, "Because talking helps!" His point was that clients will often initially feel better because "talking helps" but "more" needs to occur for lasting change.

In chapter 5, I noted that one of the reasons clients come to counselling is because their attempts to talk to others have not been successful. Clients have often talked about what is bothering them with various people: a friend, family physician, partner, family member, or minister, to name a few. It is like a story they are telling. They come to therapy with a similar expectation. "I'll come and tell you what's happening in my life and you will tell me what to do." The expectation is that somehow the therapist will have the answer and will have something that will make it better.

Through the relating of the client's experiences it appears as if the counsellor and client are connecting. In one way they are, in the telling and hearing of experiences that either happened in the past or are anticipated in the future. These experiences have been or will be outside the therapy room and they involve people other than the counsellor and client. However, it is not necessarily the kind of engagement that has been described in the earlier sections of this chapter.

This was reflected in some of the comments made by the participants:

Marnie: When I can step back and make room for the other person I give over ownership of the conversation so that I don't feel like I'm the one who's got control and I need to be the one who's shaping. That's when it flows better - when I let go of that need to be in control.

Jennifer: If I can let go of that need for control and face the fact that I'm fearful and admit that to myself then I can be okay with the space that's created.

Laura: Working too hard or trying to find the right technique is about trying to have the client do that differently.

Mary: We work too hard to ask the right question, make the right meaning find the right technique, or whatever.

George: There are things that get in the way of us being present to ourselves and so then we start to perform like a trained seal. The purpose of the performance would be to try to engage them. It's like I try and pull in all the tricks.

The participants all talked about times when they had felt the need to direct the conversation with clients. This came out of a perceived expectation that they "needed to make something happen." They also were aware either at the time or in hindsight that this had not been helpful for the client process. In fact they felt it had impeded the process. This led to further discussion regarding what was occurring at these times:

Carol: What gets triggered for me is my competence. I'm afraid of being seen by my client as incompetent. If I'm triggered, I'm not here. I am reacting.

Mary: I think at those times I am being judgmental about where the client is at and I am trying to get them to do something different. My judgement comes out of my own inability to maintain an open and accepting stance with them.

Marnie: It reminds me that competence is an ongoing thing. It is never complete because each client will ask something different of me.

Jennifer: When I'm not present to myself then I can't be present with the client because I am not taking myself seriously. If I don't take myself seriously how am I taking this client?

Becky: I think what sparks that need for control are my own fears that I'm not doing what I need to be doing.

One of the participants asked the question, "Is it about a connection but not?"

James: Forty years ago I saw a dumb cop show where a veteran tried to explain to a rookie what presence was. My words for it mean that one has a sense of one's self with boundaries and centeredness that allows one to be the man/woman of the moment. One draws others to one's centeredness.

Tom: We are connected but I think there is a way in which it's hard to be connected if we also can't be separate. There's something about being able to be solidly here in my own chair and to know that's me and then to know that's the client over in the other chair. And so be able to have a sense of separation. I think that doing our own therapeutic work and recognizing how we get triggered by somebody's material certainly facilitates that sense of separation.

One participant wondered whether it was really about "being seen." Perhaps it is that simple. Again I return to Roger's (1969) understanding of what is important in a pedagogical or therapeutic relationship: "realness or genuineness, non-possessive caring, prizing, trust, and respect and empathic understanding, sensitive and accurate listening." As clients "talk about" their experiences they limit "being seen." As the therapist and client are able to engage with each other in the present moment they are able to experience the power of "being seen."

The idea of disconnected connectedness recognizes that there are larger systemic forces that support an individual to be disconnected (not present) from self, others, nature, to name a few. The "appearance" of connection creates a dissonance in which the student expects to experience some connection but the connection is limited at best. This dissonance can actually fuel a student's sense of incompetence. This results in the student looking for other ways to "fix" the client situation. This is a reminder of the importance of the therapist's self-awareness as a resource for responding to the situation differently. In the next section, I describe parallel process in which both therapist and client, or teacher and student can respond to situations in a similar fashion. Such parallel process can perpetuate experiences of incompetence as described above.

Parallel Process

I have left the discussion of parallel process to the last because there is a way in which it weaves through all the previous seven nodes that I have described. Parallel process is a familiar concept in the field of counselling supervision. (Calligor 1984; Doehrman 1975) It describes a situation in which something in the relationship or encounter between the supervisor and supervisee appears to mirror or parallel what is occurring between the counsellor and client. Williams (1995) has observed that this experience can occur in a number of directions and is "more of a multi-lane highway than a one-way valve" (p. 7).

For example, a client comes into a counselling session feeling discouraged and helpless. The counsellor listens attentively to the account of the client's experiences and offers supportive and encouraging suggestions. The client respectfully listens to the counsellor's suggestions but for a variety of reasons is unable to follow through on anything that the counsellor offers. The counsellor begins to feel discouraged and unable to help the client. If this situation continues unabated there are a number of possible outcomes:

- The client will continue to feel discouraged and helpless and will likely discontinue counselling.

- The client's discouragement and helplessness will deepen because here is another "nice" person who tried to help and it didn't work.
- The client will become frustrated and, because the counsellor seems unable to help, will perceive the counsellor as incompetent.
- The counsellor will become frustrated with the client because the client is unwilling to follow up on any of the suggestions the counsellor made.
- The counsellor's frustration may increase to the point of anger. The counsellor may then become judgmental toward the client, accusing the client of not really wanting to change.
- The counsellor begins to doubt her or his own competence and loses any sense of satisfaction in working with clients.

Another layer of parallel process could occur within the supervisory relationship when the counsellor discusses the work with this client. The counsellor might come to supervision feeling very helpless and discouraged about working with this client. As the counsellor begins to talk about the various approaches taken with the client, the supervisor may have some insights or make some very helpful comments. One possible response from the counsellor is to negate or dismiss the suggestions or insights from the supervisor. If this situation continues then the various responses that were available to the counsellor and client can now be lived out in the supervisory relationship as well.

The experience of parallel process can be very helpful in both the therapeutic and supervisory settings. The counsellor's or supervisor's experience of discouragement or helplessness is "a window" into what is currently occurring within the relationship. When the counsellor and supervisor are able to recognize that their experiences are simply reflecting the client or student's experience then it is possible to respond differently.

> Carol noted: When I recognize that I am feeling angry and I wasn't feeling angry before working with this client then I can wonder whether or not the client is angry as well. It's about paying attention and noticing what's happening.

The experience of the therapist or supervisor in the moment is crucial for inviting the student or client to be present in the current experience. In a sense the therapist or supervisor acts as a mirror reflecting back, but it is more than simply reflecting. The therapist or supervisor is aware of her or his experience and the experience of the client, as well as what is occurring within the relationship. In response to their own experiences, therapists or supervisors invite students or clients to reflect on their experience in the context of the relationship. This helps both students and clients to expand their understanding of what is occurring and to open up different possibilities for responding. These are occasions for learning that require a tactful response. The therapist needs to be committed to personal ongoing growth and development in order to respond in this manner.

In this chapter I have identified eight hermeneutical "nodes" as a way of inquiring into the complex experience of presence. The first node "The elusiveness of presence," indicates that presence is both tangible and elusive. Self-awareness plays a vital role in the recognition of one's ability to be present. Attending to the immediate physical and emotional lived experience brings awareness of a connection or lack of connection with the self and other. It is the "present" reflection on the current lived experience that enables the development of the therapeutic or pedagogical relationship.

The second node, "It's more than you and me," acknowledges that if the therapeutic or pedagogical relationship is truly a relationship, then both individuals will be changed and what occurs will be greater than each. This requires a willingness on the part of the therapist or teacher to be drawn into the experience of the other and to relinquish a radical self-possession. Such a relationship also calls for an openness to the dynamic interplay between teacher and student or therapist and client and the focus of the conversation. In this node the importance of the person of the teacher or therapist became apparent. While understanding theory or counselling techniques is important it was also noted that what separated "good" teachers or therapists from "bad" ones was the ability to embody what was being taught. This creative tension between the development of the person and the development of the professional is not acknowledged in many counselling programs. Rather, the focus is predominantly on theory and technique.

The third node "The vulnerable ego" further develops the themes of embodied awareness and the dynamic interplay of self, other and the relationship. Like a dance, the experience of sharing past or expected future experiences in the present moment, draws both partners in, in ways that are unpredictable. This unpredictability requires teachers or counsellors to have an immediate awareness of themselves and other, and a willingness to "give over" to the movement of the relationship. This differs from understanding reflection as simply a cognitive activity in response to a past experience. It was noted that this ability to be present was a gift or talent that could be further nurtured and honed through the learning process.

The fourth node "It's about the learning," recognizes that learning does not happen in isolation. The relationship with a mentor (teacher or supervisor) plays a significant role in providing a context where the student can be "understood, found, and unconditionally accepted." It is in this context where students can "face themselves," and recognize the limitations they are experiencing as "occasions" for learning. A sense of vulnerability is a normal part of the learning process. This experience of vulnerability is often very difficult for adult learners who come with the expectation that "not knowing" indicates incompetence. Consequently, they respond in ways that attempt to control the movement in the relationship between self and other. As students are able to "face themselves" with support from a mentor they begin to recognize their experience of vulnerability as a resource for learning. At the beginning these "unstable moments" are often recognized as pedagogical opportunities by the mentor or teacher and later by either the teacher or student. In a parallel fashion, the therapist provides a context where clients can "face themselves," recognize their vulnerability as a resource for learning and utilize the "unstable moments" as opportunities for learning and growth.

The fifth node "The learning occasion," addresses the significance of the teacher's belief in the student's ability to learn. This recognizes, building on the previous node, that learning is best done in relationship. The teachers' belief creates a space or "relational container" for students to discover, explore, or struggle with that which is being "occasioned" for learning. While teachers participate in the students' learning process, they do not determine what students will learn. This recognizes the tension between "curriculum-as-plan" and "curriculum-as-lived" and invites teachers to appreciate the unique learning needs of students. The space created for learning not only includes the actual physical space where the learning occurs but more importantly includes the embodied space of both teacher and learner. Presence is communicated through gesture, eye contact, physical touch, tone of voice, silence, etc. Thus, self-awareness for both teachers and students is experienced through embodiment in the present moment. This embodied experience in the present moment creates an altered perception of time and space. It recognizes that the past and future have particular importance in how they impact the present. This different experience of time and space leads to an appreciation of the mystery of presence and a recognition that it is "more than you and me."

The sixth node "Problems about learning," continues from the previous node to address the challenges that adult learners face in a new learning situation. On the one hand, students recognize that there is no other way to learn than to bump into their limitations and at the same time this increases their anxiety and fears about being seen as incompetent. As students are able to recognize the relationship as a "relational container" where learning can occur, they can begin to let go of previous experiences or perceptions that learning is either "bad"or "good." At times this will mean the "problems about learning" that have resulted from previous experiences need to be addressed in the current learning context. As students are able to recognize that learning is simply about learning and nothing else they are free to be open to learn.

The seventh node, "Disconnected connections," recognizes that we live in a culture that supports and encourages disconnection with self, other, and the natural world. Consequently, clients (and therapists too!) often look outside of themselves for solutions to the presenting situation. Clients come to counselling because they have been unable to find a solution on their own and their attempts to talk with others have not been enough to facilitate change. They come to counselling expecting that the therapist will have the answer. Through the recounting of events, it can appear that the therapist and client are connecting and in one way they are, through the details of the client's experience. However, the level of engagement and the potential for meaningful change and growth are seriously limited. As the therapist is able to recognize the "disconnected connectedness," other opportunities for engagement can be explored. As therapists and clients are able to engage each other, or be present, the client can experience the power of being "understood, found, and unconditionally accepted." As a result the client will begin to identify experiences of disconnection and be able to respond differently in relationship to self, other and the natural world.

The eighth node, "Parallel process," acknowledges the dynamic interplay between self, other, and the focus of discussion. The relationship between teacher and student or therapist and client is complex, involving many layers of communication. As the participants in these relationships are open to each other, they are affected by the other.. This can be experienced as both helpful and unhelpful. Sometimes therapists or teachers become aware that what they are experiencing is a replication of the client's or student's experience. This can sometimes be experienced as a sense of stuckness or in having strong emotional responses in relation to the student or client. When the teacher or therapist is not aware of what is occurring in the relationship, the potential for learning is severely hampered because the teacher or therapist is simply reenacting the same dynamic. If the teacher or therapist can recognize that their experience is simply parallel to that of the student or client and they can "face themselves" in this situation, other possible opportunities for responding are created. This can be a significant occasion for learning for both therapist and student or teacher and client.

I began this chapter using the metaphor of a rhizome to illustrate the experience of presence. Rhizomes are hardy plants that resist being destroyed because of the complexity of their structure. Everything is connected to everything else in a vast underground network. One only needs to try and get rid of quack grass in one's lawn to discover its ubiquitous nature, that is, "seemingly present everywhere at the same time." Presence is a complex phenomenon that resists being contained by language. The eight hermeneutical nodes represent a complex rhizomean network of supporting structures for the experience of presence.

Chapter 7 summarizes the research findings and describes the implications for the practice of teaching and counselling.

Chapter Seven: Endings and Beginnings

November 1981 It's been a long day. I drove to Calgary today to visit five parishioners in the hospital. Mr. Davidson isn't doing very well. Clara is having a really hard time with his illness. Mrs. Hanson is dying. It was good to have a chance to visit with her daughter. The others should be home soon. Boy, am I tired! Look at that - Patches is here right at my feet.

December 1981 Well, the rush for Christmas has started! The Sunday school children are getting ready for their pageant. This year they're doing a "live" presentation of the Christmas story. I have such a bad cold. I feel just awful but we had to go out into the country today to take pictures of the different parts of the story. It was so cold! I'm sure ready for a warm cup of tea. Patches is such good company. He's just sitting here looking at me with adoring eyes.

February 1982 Tonight was the annual meeting of the congregation. It's good to have that over for another year. Patches is here again. Hmmm, that's interesting. Seems to me that he comes to be with me when I'm tired. Maybe that meeting was more stressful than I realized. Come to think of it, it was very stressful.

March 1982 I come home today and flop into the chair. Patches is immediately here, attentively watching me. I suddenly recognize that it's been a hard day and I am feeling very discouraged. So good to have someone who just seems to know what I'm experiencing.

These experiences followed in the months after the scenario described at the beginning of chapter one. Life had returned to "normal" and I was caught up in the business of parish life. However, I continued to wonder about the "more" that I had experienced with the family. Patches was a wonderful and unexpected gift. There had been many topics of conversation over the course of the eleven weeks I had spent with the family. One of the extended family members was a breeder of Shetland Sheepdogs and always brought a couple of dogs along when visiting the family. Of course the dogs were the focus of attention and conversation from time to time. It was from those times that they knew I loved dogs. As a result, they arranged for Patches to be flown in from a kennel in British Columbia.

Since I had never owned a dog before I was unaware of the potential for relationship. At first, Patches provided opportunities for play and companionship. When I would come in the door, he would greet my arrival with great exuberance. Over time I learned that he was just as happy to see me whether I had been gone five minutes or five hours. His attentive, loyal and unconditional response was new for me. As the months progressed I began to notice his increased attentiveness to me at certain times. His attentiveness at these times focussed my attention to noticing what was different. I began to recognize that Patches remained physically closer to me and watched me more attentively when I was ill or tired or when I felt sad, overwhelmed, discouraged or frustrated. In the beginning I was unaware of these feelings but gradually came to experience his attentiveness as an invitation to notice what I was thinking and feeling.

Over time, I became able to recognize these without him. However, Patches was the first teacher who opened a space in which I was unconditionally attended to. In this space I felt invited to attend to myself.

In chapter one, I noted how, subsequent to the experience with the family, I pursued a greater understanding of the "more." I participated in workshops, read other books, enrolled in pastoral counselling education, engaged in my own therapy, observed and reflected upon my experience and had conversations with others. Patches was a companion and mentor through many of these experiences. Ultimately, my desire to understand the "more" led me to engage in this research.

As I come to the place in this dissertation of summarizing the findings from the research, I am aware of the complexity of such a task. This research project has not proceeded in a linear fashion. I did not begin at a certain point and simply proceed to a conclusion. My daily life has continued to present opportunities for learning about presence and these have informed the research just as the research has influenced my personal and professional life. All of this has combined to influence my understanding of presence.

Through this research I have wanted to better understand the experience of presence in both the pedagogical and therapeutic relationship. As a pastoral counselling teaching supervisor, I have been interested in how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients. While there are differences between a pedagogical and therapeutic relationship, the experience of presence in many ways is similar. If learning is understood to be "occasioned" and not caused, and if the self is a participant in the making of knowledge, then both the pedagogical and therapeutic relationships are contexts for learning. It is the focus and purpose of the relationship that differ.

In light of what I know now, how would I respond to the young parish pastor in chapter one if she came to me for supervision? The pastor is coming to supervision because she feels incompetent. She is facing the first significant challenge to her personal and professional identity. This identity is founded in a modernist understanding of the self, where the self is fixed and can be fully known through hard work and determination. The young pastor has worked hard at her self-understanding and academics. However, in the face of this challenge, these resources are not enough. She responds in a very instrumental fashion to the family's crisis. She believes she is either competent or not. Since she is unable to come up with what she thought were the "right" answers to the family's questions then she must be incompetent.

The young pastor's experience of incompetence is in itself a crisis of understanding or a shattering of a foundational assumption about herself. How could she be so incompetent? She has been a good student and she has worked hard to develop her professional competencies. It is like a simple mathematical equation, a+b=c. For her, there is only one answer available for "c." When the answer is incompetence, there is no other place for her to go, She is stuck. The familiar response to such a dilemma is to search outside herself for the answer in order to find just what is needed for the situation and to plug it in.

As the supervisor, I would listen to the young pastor's experience. I would attend to the various elements of her experience: her panic in not knowing or being able to find the "right" answer to make everybody feel better; her beliefs about her incompetence; feelings of discouragement and helplessness; her fear resulting from the intrusion into her safe community; the many questions that are surfacing as a result of her experience. In listening to the young pastor, I would be offering a space where she could enter and share whatever was important for her at that moment.

I would invite the young pastor to be curious. What is her experience telling her? She understands the message to be one of incompetence. Could her questions be inviting something else? Michael Maley (1995) writes that answers put a form and structure on situations. It helps us know what has happened and what to look to in the future. We can do something with an answer - build on it, organize it, defend against it, or rest easy. He observes:

> A question, however, has no fixed form. It is only the beginning of a form, the next step after nothing. Questions are ways in which we begin to extend toward something. They are possibilities and anticipations. By their very nature, they are risks. You give up control when you ask a true question, since you have no way of knowing what will come back as the answer. Questions are a way of entering the mystery of something - a way of allowing it to show you what it is. (p. 6)

In the questions I pose, I would resist the possibilities of searching for the "truth" in the experience. The questions would emerge from the conversation and the answers would lead us in unexpected ways. The focus is not on myself, on the pastor, or on the content of the discussion. It is on the dynamic interplay between us. It is more than the pastor and me.

As I engage in conversation with the pastor, I continue to attend to the pastor, myself and the relationship. I bring a disciplined sensitivity to interpret inner thoughts, understandings and feelings. I observe the pastor's gestures, tone of voice, and demeanor. I listen both for what is said and what is left unsaid. I am also conscious of my own thoughts, feelings, and needs in allowing myself to be open to the other and to respond in a way that would facilitate the pastor's learning. As I am immediately aware of my own experience and the relationship, I am able to "give over" to the movement of the relationship.

Recognizing that I do not come to the relationship as a "neutral" participant, I am aware of the ways in which I can interfere with my own experience of presence and thereby hinder the young pastor. I notice the ways in which my attention is drawn outside of the relationship and I bring my focus back. As I work with this individual, I am conscious of how I might respond in a "parallel" fashion to the ways that the pastor has been with the family. Depending on how the conversation with the student unfolds, I might begin to feel discouraged, helpless, overwhelmed and incompetent myself. In response to these feelings I could begin to look for the "answer" outside of the relationship with the young pastor. It remains important for me to be attentive to my experience, recognizing that these feelings are windows both into my personal experience and also into what is occurring for the pastor and in the relationship.

As a young parish pastor, her tendency is to respond to her own sense of vulnerability by clinging more stringently to a sense of structure or to a theoretical perspective that she has learned. While she is attempting to connect with the family by inviting them to tell her more details of the situation, she is also conscious that a connection is not being made. It is a disconnected connection. As a resource for her work with the family, I would invite her to recognize her own vulnerability in the situation and to wonder about the family's experience of vulnerability. This could invite a different kind of engagement or connection.

In conversation with the young pastor, I ask her to reflect on what she is noticing as we talk together. I invite her to focus on her whole person: thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. I also encourage her to notice what it is like to be talking about these things with me. My approach would be one of wonder and curiosity, noticing what she is able to articulate and also recognizing the places where she is unsure or unable to put her experience into words.

I invite her to see the limitations she is experiencing as opportunities for learning rather than deficiencies that indicate her incompetence. Is she willing to continue to address these areas of learning? Is that something the two of us can do together?

I recognize that as an adult learner, the young pastor comes to this new learning situation with many past experiences with other teachers and individuals in authority. I attend to signs of discomfort, shame, fear or other feelings that might indicate that she is having problems engaging in a joint process of looking at her work. I invite her to talk about these feelings.

At the end of the session I ask her to reflect on the time we have spent together. How was that for her? Is there anything that she experienced in the session with me that might be helpful for her work with the family? My hope is that, as she feels heard and supported by me, she will learn that she does not have to "do" something with the family but rather can be present and invite them to share with her. In a parallel fashion to what occurs in the supervisory session, the pastor will learn to create a safe container where the family can share what is important to them. In the context of the relationship new learnings and deeper understandings can emerge.

Specific Implications for Teaching Pastoral Counsellors

At the beginning of the research there were three objectives. The first was to understand how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with clients. The second was to contribute to the research on human learning by attempting to discern how teachers create the conditions for and facilitate such learning. The third objective was to understand how both teachers and students recognize and utilize this experience of learning.

In thinking how this research on presence will further impact my approach to pastoral counselling education, I am aware of the potential opportunities that are presented. Beyond the significance for the individual supervisory relationship, there are also important implications for the program as a whole. Undergirding the program, I understand more fully now, that the pedagogical relationship is a learning relationship and is also a relationship that learns. I recognize that this understanding informs every aspect of the program from the admission interview to the final evaluation.

I propose to use the experience of conducting admission interviews with potential students as a way of demonstrating how various elements from the previous chapters might be integrated into a pastoral counselling education program.

Students come from a variety of personal and professional contexts which become part of the current learning experience. They are now being "thrown" into a new context of learning, however, they bring their "situated existence" with them. Consequently, they will respond to this new learning situation in light of past experiences because we interpret present experience on the basis of the remembered past and also of the imagined future. Since learning is contexualized can the student be open to the new learning context into which he or she has been "thrown"? I am aware of my own "throwness" when I go the Caribbean to conduct admission interviews. I bring with me my situated existence in North America and am conscious of needing to pay particular attention to my prejudices or pre-judgements that I bring with me. Attending to my embodied experience of anxiety, discomfort, confusion or uncertainty creates opportunities for me to become conscious of my pre-judgements and then to engage more openly in dialogue.

In the interview I am interested in discovering how students understand themselves. I invite students to tell me what brings them to the study of pastoral counselling. In response to such a question, some students will predominantly recount their professional experience and their educational history. Other students will offer more personal experiences that have led to their interest in pastoral counselling. Recognizing that narration is an interpretive activity and not simply a mirroring of the past, I am interested in the recollections that students choose to share. I recognize in this that the self is not predetermined but continues to emerge and be created by the current experience of the interview.

I am aware that while the interview is a required element of the program, "opportunities for learning" are being immediately presented. I am interested in knowing how this student engages the opportunity. While there are not many "trestles" yet in place, can the students begin to engage the learning relationship? Are the students able to acknowledge that they do not know something or are they trying to impress me with the vast knowledge that they have already acquired? From this conversation, I would begin to know what students expect from this learning relationship. From an "enactivist" model, learning is occasioned and not caused. This means that learning is usually a result of an unexpected and unpredictable opportunity. The purpose of the admission interview is not predominantly for gathering information but recognizes that in the interview itself there is the possibility for significant understandings to coemerge. Consequently, the admission interview is not simply a "hoop to jump through" but is an integral part of the learning.

Often in the admission interview learning is "occasioned" as a result of the student's anxiety. Heidegger observes that life is uncertain and continually changing and that anxiety is an indication of our humanness. Students in an interview can respond to their anxiety in a variety of ways: asking a lot of questions about the program, being very controlled in what they share, speaking very theoretically or abstractly, or in an impersonal manner, and remaining distant or aloof, to name a few. Having had my own experiences of anxiety and recognizing how painful it is, I would use my disciplined sensitivity in responding (rather than judging or ignoring their behavior). I would gently engage the student in dialogue regarding his or her experience of anxiety in the present moment. Are they able and/or willing to face themselves and to accept their humanness in this moment or not?

As noted earlier, students bring their situated existence into this new context. As a rule, students have learned that one does not show one's vulnerability in an interview situation. However, in the counselling context, it is very important that students are able to or are willing to learn to be present to their own embodied experience. This may be the learning that is occasioned through the anxiety experienced in the interview. Can students allow themselves to learn in this way? Can they see that learning is just about learning? In the admission interview, I am aware that it is likely that I am the one who is holding this awareness. However, later in the program students may realize that the interview was their first learning opportunity.

For me as the supervisor, there is also always an unexpectedness in the interview process. I am not able to predict the way in which the interview will unfold. While I have some basic questions that I want to ask, I also realize that what is important will emerge from the interaction between us. What that will be I do not know. This is the improvisational nature of the work. What informs me quite significantly is my embodied experience of what is happening within me, the applicant, and between us. I have come to know the importance of trusting my embodied experience and recognize the important resource it provides for my work with the student.

Students will present very differently in an interview depending on how accessible and expressive they are. It is important to address the unique needs of each student in the interview. Recognizing that an individual's willingness to be accessible and expressive in an interview situation may be somewhat limited, I nonetheless am interested in assessing whether or not students are open to being affected by the interview experience and whether they are willing to express this subjective experience.

An underlying intention in the admission interview (and subsequently in the program) is to create a space or relational container into which the student can enter and be present in the moment. The admission interview is a significant opportunity for learning to be present.

The rhizomean nature of the experience of presence that has emerged in this research project underlies everything within the pastoral counselling education program. I used the admission interview as an example of how this might be demonstrated. Similarly, one could go through all the elements of the program: development of curricula, supervisory sessions, peer learning opportunities, the evaluation process, to name a few, and find the interconnected web of the experience of presence.

Implications of the Research

The research seems to indicate that training as a counsellor, in and of itself, does not necessarily guarantee positive client results. A much more important factor seems to be the therapist's ability to engage or be present with the client in a therapeutic relationship. While the knowledge of psychological and counselling theories is important (the classical training), it is equally important that students are encouraged and supported in developing their own style of counselling (the art of therapy). This can only happen if students are involved in some kind of practical experience where they are working with clients, where they have opportunity to reflect on their work with a supervisor and or peers and where they can continue to engage in their own process of developing their self-awareness. This requires the student to be open to living in the tension between the structure of the therapy session and the lived experience with the client. As students are able to hear the content of the session but not overly focus on it, they are free to listen more deeply to themselves, the client, and what is occurring in between. This requires the student to live with ambiguity, not knowing, but remaining attentive to the structure.

Many counselling programs accept students based solely on academic performance. Since success as a therapist is primarily about the ability to engage the client, it would seem that the admission process should assess the student's ability to be present. In the program that I co-ordinate, an individual interview has been incorporated into the admission process. While this does not assure a student's ability to engage clients, it is one way to assess the student's ability to engage with the interviewers and potentially with clients.

If the therapeutic process is mainly about learning then it is important for the student to be able to enter into the learning process with the client. Are they able to do that in a manner that upholds the learning for the client or are they invested in the client's successful acquisition of knowledge or a particular life skill? Does the student have adequate self awareness to recognize personal vulnerability in the therapeutic relationship and integrate it into the work appropriately?

Therapist self-awareness is an important resource for therapeutic work with clients. Most counselling programs do not incorporate a personal therapy requirement into the program. While there are other ways for students to enhance their self-awareness, personal therapy can be an important resource for this work. If one is going to be a therapist then it follows that experiencing therapy for oneself would be important.

Further Research

Learning to be present with clients seems to come quite naturally for some students, others are able to master the art, and for some it is very challenging. How does one account for this differing ability to learn to be present? Is it simply that some students have the inborn ability that has been fostered in earlier life experiences, while other students can discover this ability in the learning process? What about the students who find it very challenging and may never be able to be truly present with their clients? Do they need a different kind of supervision or practical experience? Alternatively, do admission procedures need to somehow be able to recognize these limitations and refuse admittance into the program? How does one assess a student's ability to learn to be present? These are questions for further research and study.

What is the role of culture in the experience of presence? As part of my role as co-coordinator of the Master of Arts in Pastoral Psychology and Counselling (MAPPC) at St. Stephen's College, I have been involved in delivering the degree to Grand Cayman and Jamaica. The Institute for Theological Leadership and Development there approached St. Stephen's College regarding the possibility of developing a partnership to deliver the degree. The structure of the degree has remained the same. However, some of the course content has been adapted to incorporate Caribbean material and to address the particular challenges facing counsellors in Jamaica and Grand Cayman. I have experienced this partnership as a very rich learning experience.

Recently, I was in Jamaica, participating in the admission interviews for another group of incoming students.This caused me to wonder about the role of culture in the experience of presence. The Caribbean community faces many challenges economically, politically, and socially. Students applying to the program share a desire to "equip themselves to be able to better serve the needs of their people." Their passion for learning is fuelled by the challenges they face every day in their professional lives. The students may be teachers, clergy, or individuals involved in community development projects. They live with the reality of daily violence, HIV/AIDS, and severe economic pressures, to name a few of the problems they face. Over the last three years I have not supervised any clinical work, but I have been involved annually in the admission interviews, in a day long workshop, and in a class taught in an intensive format. In response to the urgency and intensity of their experiences, students often leap to find ways to fix situations. In one case, I had a very interesting experience in light of the personal experience that I shared at the beginning of the dissertation. A woman came in for her admission interview and was visibly distressed. I had met her on a previous trip and so recognized her changed appearance. Just before coming for the interview she had received a phone call from her daughter that the girl's best friend had been killed in front of the school gate that morning. Her daughter was distraught. She asked her mother, "Where was Jesus?" After listening to the mother's distress at the death of her daughter's friend and also her concern regarding her daughter's apparent crisis of faith, the woman looked at me with pleading eyes and said, "What am I supposed to do?" Before I could respond she jumped in with suggestions about possible solutions and, in particular, responses to her daughter's question. She was deeply concerned about her daughter and especially her question of faith. I suggested to her that what her daughter needed was someone to simply listen and support her in a caring and loving manner. She had experienced a great tragedy and of course was trying to make sense of it for herself. But more than anything she just needed her mother to be there with her, to hold her in a loving way as she grieved and sorted it out for herself. In response to my words, the mother visibly calmed down and her eyes lit up with a look of deep understanding. It was natural that in the face of such a horrific tragedy she would want to somehow relieve her daughter's pain. Yet it is only possible to "be with" the other as she lives through the painful experience.

While the mother's experience was reminiscent of my own, it led me to wonder about the role of culture in the experience of presence. Whereas the urgency and intensity of life experience in the Caribbean may seem greater than in the context I studied, I am curious about the similarities and differences in the importance of being present in a different cultural context. What impact does the religious and social context have on the experience of presence?

Another area that I am interested in pursuing further is the idea of the counselling experience as a learning relationship and a relationship that learns. While the current research indicates similarities between the pedagogical and therapeutic relationship, I would like to explore further the ways in which they are similar and different. I believe that understanding the counselling experience as an occasion for learning could "depathologize" therapy and potentially lead to less cultural judgment of the experience.

Personal Response to the Research

How have I been changed by the research? One thing I have come to know more clearly is that there is no end point or complete mastery to the experience of presence. While I can recognize the growth and understanding that I brought into this project, the project itself and life's ongoing challenges have continued to create opportunities for ongoing learning. Let me describe two instances. The first occurred toward the end of my second year in the doctoral program. Before entering the program I was working more than full time, married and parenting two children. I simply added the doctoral program on top of these responsibilities, somehow expecting myself to "sleep less" and "work faster." By the end of the first year my health was compromised and by the end of the second year I physically collapsed. I had not attended to the signals my body was giving me and consequently ended up taking six months off work. Since that time, it has been a very slow process of recovery. It has required me to attend much differently to my embodied experience. The limitations of energy, strength, and feelings of wellness have created opportunities for learning. What I am learning is that as I am present to my own physical experience in the world I am able to respond differently and support my body to recover. I also am now experiencing myself as embodied in a much different way than before.

Secondly, I have come to a deeper appreciation of the role of the mentor in the learning process. The relationship with my advisor was particularly important during the research and writing of my dissertation. There was a crucial point near the end of writing the dissertation when I fell into a "black hole." I was overcome with inadequacy, despair, and doubts about my ability to finish the dissertation. In desperation, I telephoned my advisor. He listened to me. As he was present with me in that moment, I felt supported. With his confidence in me, I was able to regain self-confidence once more. I began to write again following the telephone conversation and suddenly realized that this experience of presence was exactly what I was attempting to write about in the dissertation. In retrospect, I am profoundly aware that presence is a gift.

As this dissertation comes to an end, I am aware that learning is never complete. I began with the scenario that I experienced as a young parish pastor, an experience that precipitated my desire to understand the "more." This dissertation has been the most recent opportunity to learn about the "more." While the theory has been invaluable, a huge portion of the learning has come through the "experience" of presence.

Being present is living in the moment. It is recognizing that there is no need to wait for the right moment. The right moment is now.

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Appendix I: Ethics Review

FACULTIES OF EDUCATION AND EXTENSION RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Please submit one copy of the Application page, the Ethics Review Summary form, the Overview of the Project, the Procedures for Observing Ethical Guidelines and all accompanying materials to the Research Ethics Board representative in your unit..

Name: Kristine Lund

Project Title: The Pastoral Counselling Student's Experience of Learning to be Present with their Clients

Please provide a clear concise description of the purpose, significance and method of your research project. Give detailed explanations of how you intend to involve human participants, whether the participants are underage, legally incompetent, or otherwise could be considered "captive", and the conditions of their involvement. Please try to confine your project overview to two pages (about 800 words) maximum.

This research has three general objectives. First, it aims to understand how a pastoral counselling student learns to be present with their client(s). Second, it aims to contribute to the research on human learning by attempting to discern how teachers create the conditions for and facilitate such learning. Third, it aims to understand how both teachers and students recognize and utilize the experience of learning.

The Research Process

This phase of the study will involve autobiographical material, an interview with my daughter's math tutor, focus group interviews with my former students and counselling supervisors and therapists, and a look at popular culture and how it views both counselling and the teaching-learning process.

Autobiographical. Autobiography will be used to describe the researcher's experience of learning to be present with clients. In particular, attention will be paid to those conditions that facilitated this learning and the recognition of the experience of presence.

Focus Group Interviews. Focus group interviews will be organized for two groups: former students and counselling supervisors and therapists. These groups will meet for a minimum of two meetings. Each group will consist of participants that the researcher has contacted by phone and initially interviewed. These participants will either be working in the field of counselling or have interest in the research question. Participants will be asked to engage with materials - including readings (e.g. discussion papers) and other representations (e.g. movies) - which will be interpreted in relation to participant-generated accounts and representations of past and current experience.

Interviews with my daughter's tutor. These interviews will be a form of data collection in which significant and particular information related to the research question is examined. This interview will be structured with open-ended questions and will be based on action research methodology. It is expected that the participant will be involved in at least two interviews. The interviews will be developed around topics emerging from the participant's involvement in tutoring.

Popular culture. Given that the research will include popular constructs of what it means to be a 'good counselor', I will also aim to contextualize the study in terms of the broader cultural, political, and economic considerations that might help to frame such conceptions.

Identification and Organization of Research Participants. The invitation to participate will be extended to those who either have been former students, professional colleagues, or the tutor of the researcher's child. These persons will be contacted either by telephone, email, or in person. The researcher will contact all respondents, both to ensure that the demands of participation are understood and to make certain that prospective participants' understandings and intentions are consistent with the aims of the research.

Data Collection and Interpretation. Data collected will include: data collected from autobiographical material, individual interviews, focus group interviews and popular culture.

Participants in the research will also be asked to sign a "confidentiality" agreement, stating that they will respect the privacy and confidentiality of other members participating in the research and an informed consent form stating that they understand the purpose of the research and how the findings will be used.

Section 2: Procedures for Observing Ethical Guidelines

You are required to follow the specific procedures for observing the University of Alberta Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. Please describe clearly and concisely how you intend to observe the guidelines by answering each of the six points below. The accompanying Background Principles document provides detailed information on each of the six points below and you can also consult the full document on the university web site at http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec66.html

You are required to attach:

A copy of consent form(s), - see attached
A copy of any additional letter(s), - see attached
A copy of any data gathering instruments. - none
In the case of published instruments, only the name need be given.
In the case of interviews, sample interview questions must be included. - see attached

Please try to confine your written response to the following points to three pages or approximately 1000 words.

1. How will you explain the purpose and nature of your research to participants?

The purpose and nature of the research will be communicated first, through the initial contact made either personally, by email or telephone with participants. Second, an introductory letter will be sent to prospective participants who have expressed interest in participating in the research. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity will be presented in the letter, along with opting in and out of various aspects of the project.

In addition, all persons who express interest in participating in the research will be given an opportunity to discuss the research, either in person or by telephone. These discussions will emphasize the contents of the "letter of consent" as well as provide an opportunity for the prospective participants to make an informed decision regarding possible participation in the research.

2. How will you obtain the INFORMED consent of the participants?

Kristine Lund will be responsible for distributing the information letter and for responding to any questions from prospective participants. She will also oversee the collection of signed letters of consent.

3. How will you provide opportunities for your participants to exercise the right to opt out?

Participation is voluntary and flexible. Participants can choose to opt in or out of the research, depending on their own interests and immediate obligations. These details are made clear in the introductory letter.

4. How will you address anonymity and confidentiality issues?

Pseudonyms for participants and locations are used in all records and reports. Any aspect of a report-to-be-published that deals with a specific participant will be subject to the review and approval of that participant.

5. How will you avoid threat or harm to the participants or to others?

To my knowledge, there are no threats involved in the research. It is possible that participants may experience discomfort and/or anxiety from their involvements in the research. This possibility is outlined in the information letter for participants.

6. How will you provide for security of the data?

When not in use, the information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the home office of Kristine Lund.

7. If you plan to use the information in other than the research report, how will you seek permission for secondary use of the data?

The potential secondary uses of the data will be outlined in the consent form that each participant will sign. Each participant will be given opportunity to raise any questions or concerns they might have regarding the secondary uses of the data.

8. If you involve assistants or transcribers in your research, how will you ensure that they observe the ethical guidelines?

The project will involve one person who will transcribe the interviews. This person will be apprised of the appropriate treatment of data and will be asked to give their assurance that they will abide by all guidelines.

9. Please describe any other procedures relevant to observing the ethical guidelines.

None.

Possible Interview Questions:

For the tutor:

1. I am interested in how you understand your work with Jane?

2. What do you think has contributed to the gains that Jane has made?

3. What significance or role has the teaching/learning relationship had on the progress Jane has made?

4. What sustains you in your work with Jane?

5. What are some of the challenges you have experienced working with Jane?

6. How have you addressed these challenges?

For the focus groups:

1. Can you describe an experience where you felt present with a client/student?

2. How did you know you were present?

3. What contributed or facilitated your experience of presence?

4. When do you experience yourself as not being present?

5. What contributes to these experiences of not being present

6. How do you know you are not present?

7. In your development as a counselor or supervisor, what facilitated your learning to be present?

8. What hindered your learning to be present?

9. Anything else that you would like to share with regard to either your experience of presence, your learning to be present, or your experience of teaching students to be present?

Consent Form for Private Interview (child's tutor)

I, ________________________________, have been informed of the research project entitled "The Pastoral Counselling Student's Experience of Learning To Be Present With Their Client" and have agreed to participate in that study.

I hereby consent . . .

a) to participate in one to three interviews;

b) to be audio-recorded during the private interviews

. . . by Kristine Lund

I understand that . . .

a) I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty;

b) all information from which I can be identified will be treated confidentially and discussed only by the researcher and her doctoral advisor;

c) I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research unless I choose to co-author papers or co-present educational sessions;

d) my comments or work may be directly represented in Kristine Lund's doctoral
dissertation; published articles, professional teaching opportunities and resource materials;

e) I will not receive any monetary compensation or other benefits from my participation in this research.

I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

a) Kristine Lund's doctoral dissertation;

b) presentations for educators/counselors and others concerned with such matters;

c) written articles and/or books for educators and counselors and others concerned with such matters;

d) teaching materials for counselling students and educators.

______________________________ ______________________________
Date Signature

For further information concerning the completion of this form, contact Kristine Lund (phone, 450-1711; email, lundk@ualberta.ca); or Dr. Dennis Sumara (phone, 492-4270; email Dennis.Sumara@ualberta.ca;)

Consent Form for Focus Groups (former students)

I, _________________________________, have been informed of the research project entitled "The Pastoral Counselling Student's Experience of Learning To Be Present With Their Client" and have agreed to participate in that study.

I hereby consent . . .

a) to participate in a minimum of two focus group interviews, with other former students of Kristine Lund who have agreed to participate in this research process;

b) to be audio-recorded during the focus group interviews

. . . by Kristine Lund

I understand that . . .

a) Prior to the focus group interviews, I will be required to sign a "confidentiality agreement", agreeing to keep confidential the identities of other group members and to refrain from discussing details of the interviews outside the context of the focus group interview;

b) I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty;

c) all information from which I can be identified will be treated confidentially and discussed only by the researcher and her doctoral advisor

d) I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research unless I choose to co-author papers or co-present educational sessions;

e) my comments or work may be directly represented in Kristine Lund's doctoral dissertation; published articles, professional teaching opportunities and resource materials;

f) I will not receive any monetary compensation or other benefits from my participation in this research.

g) I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

a) Kristine Lund's doctoral dissertation;

b) presentations for educators/counselors and others concerned with such matters;

c) written articles and/or books for educators and counselors and others concerned with such matters;

d) teaching materials for counselling students and educators.

____________________ ________________________________

Date Signature

For further information concerning the completion of this form, contact Kristine Lund (phone, 450-1711; email, lundk@ualberta.ca); or Dr. Dennis Sumara (phone, 492-4270; email Dennis.Sumara@ualberta.ca.

Consent Form for Focus Group (counselling supervisors and/or therapists)

I, ________________________________, have been informed of the research project entitled "The Pastoral Counselling Student's Experience of Learning To Be Present With Their Client" and have agreed to participate in that study.

I hereby consent . . .

a) to participate in a minimum of two focus group interviews, with other former students of Kristine Lund who have agreed to participate in this research process;

b) to be audio-recorded during the focus group interviews

. . . by Kristine Lund

I understand that . . .

a) Prior to each focus group interview, I will be required to sign a "confidentiality agreement", agreeing to keep confidential the identities of other group members and to refrain from discussing details of the interviews outside the context of the focus group interview;

b) I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty;

c) all information from which I can be identified will be treated confidentially and discussed only by the researcher and her doctoral advisor

d) I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research unless I choose to co-author papers or co-present educational sessions;

e) my comments or work may be directly represented in Kristine Lund's doctoral dissertation; published articles, professional teaching opportunities and resource materials;

f) I will not receive any monetary compensation or other benefits from my participation in this research.

I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

a) Kristine Lund's doctoral dissertation;

b) presentations for educators/counselors and others concerned with such matters;

c) written articles and/or books for educators and counselors and others concerned with such matters;

d) teaching materials for counselling students and educators.

Date

Signature

For further information concerning the completion of this form, contact Kristine Lund (phone, 450-1711; email, lundk@ualberta.ca); or Dr. Dennis Sumara (phone, 492-4270; email Dennis.Sumara@ualberta.ca;)

Information Letter for Participants

DATE

Dear ______________________:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta and I am writing to inform you of and invite you to participate in a study of how pastoral counselling students learn to be present with their clients.

The project is entitled "The Pastoral Counselling Student's Experience of Learning to Be Present With Their Client(s). The research has three main objectives: First, it aims to understand how a pastoral counselling student learns to be present with their client(s). Second, it aims to contribute to the research on human learning by attempting to discern how teachers create the conditions for and facilitate such learning. Third, it aims to understand how both teachers and students recognize and utilize the experience of presence.

The research will have focus group interviews that can involve your participation. There will be two focus groups: one consisting of former students of the researcher and the second group consisting of counselling supervisors or therapists. Each focus group will meet for two interviews that are arranged at a mutually convenient time for all participants. The first focus group meeting will require three hours and the second meeting will require two hours of your time. With your permission, each focus group meeting will be audio-taped and transcribed. Your name and any identifying information will be changed.

It is the intent of the researcher to conduct the interviews using a semi-structured format. You will be invited to engage with a short written work or film as it informs your experience of presence. The researcher will ask open-ended questions to elicit participants' experiences and thoughts in relation to the question being asked. It is the intent of the researcher to gather as much information as possible to assist in understanding presence and how presence is both learned and experienced.

I do not forsee there being any harm to you as you participate in this study. It is possible that you may experience discomfort and/or anxiety from your involvement in the research. However, I do not expect this to be significant and you would have opportunity to either limit your sharing within the group or leave if this became significant.

Taking part in this study may be of direct benefit to you as the discussion may further your own thinking and clinical practice. It is often beneficial to participate in a group discussion process as a means to facilitate our own thinking and reflection.

You will be invited to take part in the data analysis and final report of the group interviewing process. Your participation in the analysis and final report is entirely voluntary and will require the group to meet for further work in ensuring the accuracy of reporting and careful analysis of the data. I anticipate this being a beneficial activity in validating your own individual and collective experiences. It is hoped that a greater understanding of presence and of the teaching-learning process will occur.

Respect for each participant's experience will be primary. I cannot ensure confidentiality because we will each hear what the other participant's have to offer. However, I will encourage participants to respect confidentiality and only share their own experience with others. In the written reports, names and other identifying information will not appear.

Respect for each individual is of utmost importance. Therefore, I ask that we all listen attentively and respectfully to each other, knowing that their reality is not ours.

The tapes of the interviews belong to the researcher. Each interview will be transcribed removing names and identifying information and instead using pseudonyms where necessary. Written copies of these interviews will be made available to you for your verification of the experience. The tapes and consent forms will be destroyed after the project is completed. The transcribed interviews and notes will be kept by the researcher indefinitely. The transcribed interviews will be shared with the researcher's doctoral advisor at the University of Alberta.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, advisor or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardizing your relationship with the researcher and the group. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you are free to ask for clarification at any time throughout your participation. If you have further questions regarding matters related to this research, please contact Kristine Lund at 450-1711 or email lundk@ualberta.ca or her advisor, Dr. Dennis Sumara at 492- 4270 or email dsumara@ualberta.ca.